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## COMMENT

### 'PROGRESS' IN CHINA

IN 1932, the great Guru of the West, Bertrand Russell, in his book *Education and the Social Order*, posed the problem of the 'abolition of the family'. For the solution of this problem his gaze turned to that Palace of the New Humanity which the Soviet architects were building in the east in accordance with Lenin's delightful specifications: 'The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory. . .'

In spite of earlier doubts, he handed down to his disciples the following word of wisdom which was all too willingly received: 'Communism offers a solution of the difficult problem of the family and sex-equality—a solution which we may dislike, but which does, at any rate, provide a possible issue. . . . And if it conquers the world, as it may do, it will solve most of the major evils of our time. On these grounds, in spite of reservations, it deserves support.'

Actually at that time the Russian regime was retreating from the primitive Bolshevik intention of scrapping the family. Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* complained that 'Thermidor in the family' had arrived.

It was left to Mao Tse-tung, twenty-five years later, to revive the Bolshevik ambition to destroy the family. He took his 'great leap forward' into the communes, in which family life is to be replaced by a barracks type of existence, with the loss of individual homes and kitchens, and the separation of husbands from wives, and of both from their children. It was breath-taking that this ultimate assault on the oldest human institution should be begun in the civilization in which the family has played a constitutive role in the highest degree. Yet such an assault was necessary for Communism if it was to advance to its ultimate aim of the total re-making of man. And the result was bound to be a new degree of inhuman tyranny.

The destruction of family relationships was one of the old themes of utopian progressivism which the Communists inherited. Again there comes to light the curious bond between the 'liberal' progressivists and the Communists. The dreams of the former can be actualized only by being turned into the totalitarian nightmare organized by the latter. The 'liberal' ideologue finds it difficult to understand why his entrancing ideas become a horror of naked evil when reflected in reality.



If he wanted to understand, he would take far more interest than he does in the resurgence of a genuine *realistic* liberalism as exemplified by Salvador de Madariaga or Wilhelm Röpke, to name but two.

Once more the routines of falsification and apology have come into play: 'a great experiment' . . . 'miracle of peaceful persuasion' . . . 'of course, in a backward country. . . .' But this threadbare stuff is too thin to cloak the reality. For the most part, the progressivists have had little to say about the 'great leap forward'.

The truth is that they are frightened and appalled: the Chinese version is altogether too much. The modern kind of fellow-travelling is therefore less concerned to suggest that we should all be happier under Communism; clearly we should be either wretched or dead, and they know it. The new course consists in open or covert defeatism: we should come to terms, appease, disarm. The spiel is different, but one thing remains constant: the idea that we hand the world over to the Jacobin gunmen.

#### 'PROGRESS' IN TIBET

CENTURIES ago the great Guru of Tibet, Milarepa, sang:

*May peace harmonious bless this land;  
May it be ever free from maladies and war;  
May there be harvests rich, and increased yield of grain;  
May every one delight in righteousness.*

Until recently this ancient society had remained an unmodernized enclave in the world. Its people are like any other: life has its variety of meanness and nobility, evils and joys, folly and sadness. But it was a society based on a sacred tradition; its highest reverence was for the contemplatives, the world-renouncing sages, the compassionate teachers and guides of the Path. A good deal of its technology was magic; its favourite marvels were of esoteric origin:

*The heavens are filled with radiance of rainbows;  
Celestial showers of sweet-smelling blossoms fall;  
All beings alike hear harmonies melodious, and fragrance of incense  
enjoy;  
Love divine, and happiness pervade the whole assembly.  
Such are the fruits of Grace-Waves of the Kargyütpa Saints.*

The people had not asked for Progress. They were peasants; they were religious; they thought that their affairs could be managed without the ballot-box.

This is not what we would choose, nor need we too credulously idealize it, as perhaps some Westerners have done.

It would inevitably have changed in time, and contact with the West might under some conditions have been fruitful for both. But in the meantime it was their chosen way of life and they had a right to it.

Now the forces of Progress have caught up with them. They, too, are to become proletarian operatives in the universal factory. In utter desperation they are fighting a lonely, terrible war against their oppressors. Their children are seized and sent to China to be indoctrinated. Their wives are forced from them to bear children as concubines of Chinese settlers. The husbands and sons have taken to the mountains, starving and ragged, to fight to the end. No prisoners are held on either side; no quarter is given. It is a 'colonial' war; a fight for 'self-determination'. Where is the usual chorus of anti-colonial indignation? Where is the active help? The world is silent. The rhetoric of 'for whom the bell tolls' has died on the lips of those who used to protest against aggression.

Tibet, the symbol and the reality, is almost gone. The gateway to India is torn open. The armament of inhumanism is mounted on the roof of the world. And the bell is tolling: it tolls for us—as an alarm if we have the mind and will to respond, as a passing-bell if we have not.

#### THE INNER BATTLEFIELD

THE STRUGGLE for the world in the twentieth century is not merely a matter of material factors of power. The decisive arena is still the minds of men. The Communists never relax their efforts to confuse, deceive, corrupt and intimidate, though their tactics vary. Very timely is the Report of the Special Committee on Communist Tactics, Strategy and Objectives of the American Bar Association, which quotes the directive on political warfare given by Georgi Dimitrov in terms most appropriate to the contemporary situation:

As Soviet power grows, there will be a greater aversion to Communist parties everywhere. So we must practice the techniques of withdrawal. Never appear in the foreground; let our friends do the work. We must always remember that one sympathizer is generally worth more than a dozen militant Communists. A university professor, who without being a party member lends himself to the interests of the Soviet Union, is worth more than a hundred men with party cards. A writer of reputation, or a retired general, are worth more than five hundred poor devils who don't know any better than to get themselves beaten up by the police. Every man has his value, his merit. The writer who, without being a party member, defends the Soviet Union, the union leader who is outside our ranks but defends Soviet international policy, is worth more than a thousand party members.

# TO MARINA TSVETAEVA

*Boris Pasternak*

You're right to turn your pockets out  
And say: 'Well, rummage, feel, and search.'  
All's one to me why mists are damp.  
Any fact would do—a day in March.

The trees in their soft overcoats  
Stand planted in gamboge, secure,  
Although for certainty the branches  
Their wrappings hardly can endure.

The branches shiver with the dews  
Rippling like fleece upon merinos;  
The dews run shuddering like hedge-hogs  
Bearing dry haycocks on their noses.

All's one to me whose talk and chatter  
The winds from nowhere, blowing, bring,  
What rumours muffled in the mists  
I hear in every backyard spring.

All's one to me what kind of suits  
The fashion holds to be in style.  
The hearsays boxing in the poet  
Like dreams will vanish in a while.

While rolling on through many channels,  
By every fateful turn and bend  
He'll drift like smoke from pit to pit  
To yet another threatening dead-end.

But, steaming, he will rise through clefts  
On top, though flattened in the heat,  
And in the future men will say:  
'His age was burning up like peat.'

*Translated by Eugene M. Kayden*



## ZHIVAGO AND THE OTHER RUSSIA

*Peter Hastings*

**B**ORIS PASTERNAK began work on his novel *Dr Zhivago* in 1950. At that time his was not a wide reputation even among educated contemporaries but his name commanded great respect among a small number of cultivated people in his own country—and in the West—as a poet and the translator of Goethe, Shelley, Rilke, Schiller and Shakespeare. While it is now fashionable in Western countries, perhaps in his own too, for people to hail Pasternak as part of their cultural background the fact remains that until he became controversial his name was far better known than anything he had written and, even then, only to a few.

There are good reasons for Pasternak's former obscurity. It is said that his poetry is difficult to translate and that there was rather little of it. There was also the point that some poets, like some wines, do not travel well but undergo a sea change to arrive at their destination quite different in taste and content from the description on the label. Nevertheless, in 1950, Pasternak did have a reputation; the sort of reputation which comes slowly to an artist of integrity who has produced relatively little, but of high standard, over a long period of time. The sort of reputation which caused young Soviet students to regard him more as a landmark than as an inspiration just as he seems to be regarded more as symbol than artist in the couplet by which Moscow University students acclaimed him after the Nobel Prize fracas:

*The signs may change in the Zodiac  
But Pasternak is always Pasternak.*

Aware of his reputation and of his growing powers Pasternak had long had in his mind the idea of a great prose work, a novel which was to be Tolstoyan in scope but his own in method, which would clearly and uncompromisingly record the history of 'the children of Russia's terrible years'. It was to be an individualist testimony of the poet bearing witness to the turbulent and gigantic events of his own lifetime—the first World War, the two revolutions, the Civil War and the sad, grey, drab aftermath. It was to be a book in which, as his hero Yuri Zhivago explains, he would conceal 'like buried sticks of dynamite' the tremendous and compelling things he had seen—

'I had to write this book. These forty years of storm were calling for an incarnation.' It was a book, he determined, that would conform neither to the pressures of Socialist Realism nor to those of his admiring friends and fellow artists who have created about him and themselves the sort of atmosphere which official Soviet literary criticism denounces as 'internal emigration'.

*Dr Zhivago* which is not, perhaps, a great novel but which is in every sense a very remarkable one, is not least remarkable for the power, sympathy and passion with which it portrays the life and death of an educated class which despite its vices had the supreme merit of valuing opinions and individuals. To this class Boris Leonidovich Pasternak belonged and all his life he has stubbornly celebrated its values.

He was born in 1890. His father was a celebrated, goateed painter who counted as friends and subjects Rilke, Rachmaninoff and Chaliapin. He also painted Lenin after the Revolution.

He was a talented painter in the academic portrait tradition of the late nineteenth century and his talent is well expressed in a charming and nostalgic portrait of his two sons and daughters. The boys are in their early twenties, the girls in their teens. Both boys wear evening dress and are strikingly handsome. The girls wear long white dresses, their braided hair is tied with white bows and they carry flowers. Boris (Borya) declaims dramatically from a sheet of paper in his left hand. The painting evokes an atmosphere of comfort, of educated middle class interests and of intellectual freedom and the date, appropriately enough, is 1914; the year from which Yuri Zhivago was to date Russia's misfortunes, when lies, slogans and falsehood were established on a giant scale; 'that last summer when life still appeared to pay heed to individuals, and when it was easier and more natural to love than to hate.'

Pasternak's mother was the former Roza Kaufman, a talented concert pianist, half-Jewish, who with her husband brought to the Pasternak home an atmosphere of sensitivity, cultivated interests and intellectual curiosity. It was, from all accounts, a close knit family, united in interests and outlook. (Alexander, the younger brother, is now a Moscow architect while the two sisters, Lydia and Josephine, emigrated to England in the 'thirties, where one is married to a professor of psychiatry at Oxford and has translated some of Pasternak's poems.) Boris was an extremely sensitive child who allegedly contemplated suicide for several years. But there were compensations: the memory of Tolstoy in the living room where the crying, sleepy child was taken from bed to meet the guests and the unbearable



beauty of hearing Scriabin at the piano, in a neighbouring *dacha* across the forest compose his Third Symphony.

This experience in fact decided Pasternak to take up music as a career, a career at which he persisted for six years before facing up to the inescapable truth that he had no ear as a musician and no capacity to play what he had composed. Sadly he turned to law and abruptly abandoned it to depart for Marburg in Germany to study philosophy. Apart from a few undergraduate protest marches and a display of 'twopenny ha'penny revolutionism' he was not interested in politics.

In Marburg he studied Hegel and Kant, learned to drink and wept when a girl refused to marry him. After travelling in Italy he returned to Moscow and began living it up as a handsome Bohemian and a part time poet whom women chased implacably. One recalls today that he looked 'like an Arabian stallion'. He, Mayakovsky and Esenin pursued new forms in poetry which resounded like a shot in the street. Pasternak proved the tougher of the three for both Mayakovsky and Esenin died by their own hand under the Soviet, unable any longer to practise 'art made tongue-tied by authority'.

Pasternak was not called up for World War I service because of a leg injury but worked instead in a chemicals factory in the Urals which gave him first hand background for much of the action in *Dr Zhivago*. After the revolution he made his way back to Moscow where he became a respected and successful poet in the twenties. During the repressive thirties and the tyranny of the *Zhadanovschina* he remained silent and turned to translations. Silence did not save him from suspicion in high quarters and in the Terror of 1936-37 he was a marked man.

Despite the pleas of his pregnant wife he refused to sign a writers' resolution approving the death sentence of Marshal Tukachevsky ('I couldn't . . . I abhorred all this blood . . .') and only the discreet silence of his fellow artists saved his life. Although, except for two war time volumes, no poetry of his has been published since 1933, Pasternak found that he had arrived after the war. He was given a country *dacha*, a roomy, two storied house, at Peredelkino, near Moscow—one of a number forming an artists' housing colony started in the thirties by the Soviet Writers' Union. There he lives a very pleasant life (one hopes that he will continue to live it) moving familiarly around his sparsely furnished house, writing his poems and translations in longhand at a high desk, finding time for his prodigious reading and his many friends and visitors to whom he can talk fluently in English, German and French.

He is fond of parties and his dark, half-Italian wife organizes them on a large scale on Sundays when he likes to eat and drink in large quantities and give free rein to his emphatically poetic insights into literature: the combined powers of Thomas Mann and Rilke would produce, he says, a major work of art while *Ulysses* might have proved the greatest novel ever written had it retained the clarity of *Dubliners*. Until *Dr Zhivago* exploded upon the world it was the sort of life where the unavailability of Kafka was a disappointment and the unexpected release of Proust was a deep pleasure.

In this pleasant and cultivated atmosphere the man who is neither Communist nor counter-revolutionary, who spurns Socialist Realism but applauds many results of the Revolution, who describes himself as 'almost an atheist' but sees the centuries as rungs in God's ladder, finished *Dr Zhivago* in 1955. He immediately sent copies of it to leading publishing houses and several leading Moscow magazines. A Communist editor told him the book would be published in Russia even if in abridged form. Pasternak felt happy and confident and sent another copy of the MS to the Communist publisher, G. Feltrinelli, in Milan. It all seemed perfectly reassuring: Stalin was dead and the green lights seemed to be flashing along the highways of Soviet literature. Moreover Ilya Ehrenburg and Vladimir Dudintsev seemed to be negotiating the same route.

Months passed by and he was visited, while briefly in the Kremlin Clinic reserved for VIP's, by a literary official who asked him to wire Feltrinelli for return of the MS. When Feltrinelli refused Pasternak's request the Soviet Writers' Union hastily despatched its secretary, Alexei Surkov, to Milan. Feltrinelli still refused to part with *Dr Zhivago* and shortly afterwards an Italian edition was published.

Earlier I said that *Dr Zhivago* was not, perhaps, a great novel but was in every sense a very remarkable one. In structure it is vast, sprawling and untidy. Action and character development are finally resolved by a series of quite fantastic coincidences which severely strain our credulity and in many cases openly violate our sense of the reasonable and the possible. None of the characters, with the possible exception of Zhivago himself, comes to life in the actual sense.

They remain as focal points for action, for statements and feelings. Zhivago himself is like a fixed luminosity moving gently, erratically through the vast tumult about him, but always shedding light on the scene and illuminating it and letting us see it for what it is so that in the end of the novel

although we have never really known what he looked like we have shared his anguish and his suffering. Pasternak, who is saturated with symbolism, drew his hero's name from the Russian word *zhivy*, living. Zhivago represents vitality, force and opposition to death just as the name of one of the major characters in the book, Antipov—a partisan commander—suggests antipathy or a dealer in death.

The book starts with the death of Zhivago's parents and a description of the pleasant, cultivated Gromeko family which takes charge of Yuri Zhivago and brings him up. In this refined world of concerts, books and idealism Yuri's chief partner is Antonina (Tonia) Gromeko whom he is destined to marry. Elsewhere a young girl who is to become his one great love, Larisa (Lara) Guishar, is receiving a different kind of education in being seduced by a lawyer-lecher named Komarovsky whom Pasternak clearly intends to represent the evil, moneyed corruption of the *ancien regime*. With World War I Yuri enlists leaving his wife Tonia and his small son. The war is described in great detail and, as elsewhere in the book, Pasternak's power to describe scenery, to capture it in the split second like a photograph, is matchless.

Wounded, Yuri is looked after by Lara who has volunteered as a nurse. Their great love affair begins.

With the Revolution in process Yuri goes back to Moscow and his family. He is attracted to the February Revolution and enthralled by the spectacle of change. 'There arose before the eyes of the world the vast figure of Russia bursting into flames like a light of redemption for all the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind.' Moscow is a looted, famine city of bread lines and typhus, decrees and soldiers, and Yuri, although a doctor, sickened by the inefficiency of his hospital and the brutalized atmosphere takes his wife and child to his wife's estate in the Urals. The train journey is the finest thing in the book, a great panorama of movement, uncertainty and restlessness, a breathless journey of suspense in which the background is a huge country awakened and on the move.

He settles in Yuryatin (the town is a namesake) where he again meets Lara whose husband Antipov now calls himself Strelnikov, 'The Shooter', and is in charge of liquidating recalcitrant peasants. The love affair is resumed despite the tormented consciences of both Lara and Yuri. One day Yuri while returning to his home is captured by partisans and forced to work as a doctor for them for the next two years of the Civil War. It is a time of savage cruelty on both sides and Zhivago's



sentiments are almost entirely with the opposing Whites to whom he is bound by ties of blood, birth and education. But even in this he refuses to be committed and watches the savage conflict with loathing. 'The period bore out the old saying: *homo homini lupus est*. The traveller meeting another on the road turned aside, men killed in order to avoid being killed themselves. Isolated cases of cannibalism occurred. The laws of human civilization ceased to operate. The laws of the jungle prevailed. Men dreamed prehistoric dreams of the cave period.'

Zhivago eventually escapes the Partisans and returns to Yuryatin to find that his family has emigrated to Europe. He resumes his life with Lara, a strange, snow-bound idyll in which they weep for a lost life of ideals and humanity. Even this cannot last. Komarovsky reappears and takes Lara to Eastern Mongolia where in some corrupt deal with the Soviet he has arranged a pleasant exile. Yury returns to Moscow and starts to decline. He loses interest in medicine and in writing poetry. He lives with his former porter's daughter and runs errands and does odd jobs for the neighbours and his former friends. To the last he remains mocking and unrepentant, contemptuous of the new Soviet political mysticism, of all slogans and catchcries. 'Dear friends,' he says, 'how desperately commonplace you are, you, your circle, the names and authorities you quote, their brilliance and the art you so much admire. The only bright and living thing about you is that you are living at the same time as myself and are my friends.'

One morning in a tram he suffers a heart attack and dies, rotten, useless, wasted. He dies at 38 having seen, like Pasternak's own former friends Esenin and Mayakovsky, the State as the stone guest at the wedding breakfast. That effectually is the end of the novel. All that remains is an impossibly coincidental epilogue in which Pasternak is able to voice his own firm faith in Russia's burgeoning era of freedom.

In September 1956 *Novy Mir* returned to Pasternak the MS of *Dr Zhivago* together with a long letter of criticism which, despite occasional lapses into sheer malice, was well conceived and well executed.

Signed by the entire board of *Novy Mir* the letter ended with a plea quoting Pasternak's own heroine, Lara, when she said to Zhivago: 'You have changed. You used to speak more calmly about the revolution, you were less harsh about it.' The letter asked Pasternak 'to think it over'. Although the letter was not published it was undoubtedly the first shot in the campaign against Pasternak.

With the publication of *Dr Zhivago* in Italy, Pasternak's fate was sealed. Since then the book has been translated into seventeen languages and has sold 1,500,000 copies. It has become a phenomenal runaway best seller promoted chiefly on the basis of its anti-Marxist, anti-Communist sentiments. It has become inevitably both a weapon and a casualty of the cold war. Said the agonized Pasternak, 'I deplore the fuss now being made about my book. Everybody's writing about it, but who in fact has read it? What do they quote from it? Always the same passages—three pages, perhaps, out of a book of seven hundred pages.' What he might have pointed out was that *Dr Zhivago* had validity as a universal document and that his hero stood for the values of individualism, the private vision, against all forms of coercion, mass slogans and popular pressures whether in the West or East.

With the award of the Nobel Prize the full might of official Soviet displeasure was brought to bear on him. The party hacks vilified him in the old, familiar terms of official abuse, as a 'pig', a 'snake', a 'reptile', a 'hired tool in the hands of the reactionary Western clique wishing to promote the cold war'.

The award of the Nobel Prize was officially castigated in the Soviet Union as a Western cold war tactic. Soviet critics complained loudly that neither Tolstoy nor Chekov were ever awarded the prize and that the only Russian to win it was Ivan Bunin for his 'disgraceful anti-Soviet' literature in the thirties. This denunciation smacked of intense personal jealousy on the part of Writers' Union officials as much as of outraged political sentiments. Besides the criticism didn't hold water unless the Writers' Union wished to arraign Romain Rolland, Anatole France, Bernard Shaw, T. S. Eliot, Martin du Gard, William Faulkner, Bertrand Russell, André Gide, François Mauriac and Albert Camus, none of whom has been particularly noted for any association with the machinations of 'international reaction'. Clearly the Soviet was in an untenable position with regard to the prize, especially as two Soviet scientists were allowed to receive awards at the very function at which Pasternak should have received his high honour.

Over Pasternak the Soviet made one of its frequent, irreversible blunders and having taken a stand had to see it through. This it did with unrelenting severity. On 24 October *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published, together with a letter of explanation, the two year old letter to Pasternak from *Novy Mir*. On 28 October the Union of Soviet Writers unanimously resolved to expel Pasternak from its ranks. This meant that theoretically

he had none of the rights and privileges pertaining to 'the lofty and honourable calling of Soviet Writer' and had lost his Moscow flat and his *dacha* at Peredelkino. So far as is known he is still there but it may take time for the axe to fall.

Two things stand out in the campaign against Pasternak, the letter from *Novy Mir* and the nature of the threat which he apparently constituted in official Soviet eyes. Since the death of Stalin, Soviet literary magazines have published many contributions of what is officially called 'paradoxical' nature, that is stories, articles and reportage implicitly critical of the regime, of the lack of freedom and of censorship. Two books notably trail-blazed in this direction: Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* and Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*. Soviet critics attacked the first volume of *The Thaw* but notably refrained from comment on the second volume. Dudintsev's novel needs special reference. The title, taken from Church Slavonic to which rich vocabulary both he and Pasternak are particularly indebted, speaks for itself.

It is a dull and tedious book and its only interest is its fundamentally political nature. It concerns an inventor, Lopatkin, who perfects a new annealing machine. The victim of bureaucratic bungling and ministerial jealousy, Lopatkin is framed and sentenced to eight years' gaol. The perfidy of high officials is discovered and Lopatkin is re-instated. This is unexceptional in terms of socialist realism but Dudintsev's ending is not. In it, despite Lopatkin's vindication the villains remain in their jobs and one or two of them are actually promoted.

Dudintsev was attacked for his views and lack of Socialist Realism and was finally rebuked by Khrushchev. The affair then blew over and it is hard now to find any echoes of the controversy. Ironically Pasternak was violently abused for writing a fundamentally non-political novel in which he took no sides beyond saying that he disliked the old order and detested the new.

It is this refusal to take sides, this championship of individual choice, eccentricity and idiosyncrasy which explains the violence of the attacks he has suffered in the Soviet Union. This view far more than any internal criticism of the regime, strikes at the greatest weakness in Communism. It is the unforgivable ('maximised individualism') as *Novy Mir* points out. In its criticism *Novy Mir* turns time and again to this stubborn and intractable aspect of *Dr Zhivago*. It is infuriated by the statement of Yuri's father-in-law, Alexander Alexandroitch: 'Do you remember that night, in winter, in the middle of a snowstorm, when you brought me the paper with the first government



decrees? You remember how unbelievably direct and uncompromising they were? It was that straightforwardness that appealed to us. But such things keep their original purity only in the minds of those who conceived them, and then only on the day they are promulgated. By the day after the casuistry of politics has turned them inside out. . . .'

Again when Yuri is talking to Liverius Averkievich, the partisan commander: 'In the first place, the idea of social betterment as it is understood since the October Revolution does not fill me with enthusiasm. Secondly this is all very far from being put into practice, and the mere talk about it has cost such a sea of blood that I am not at all sure if the end justifies the means. And, lastly and above all, when I hear people speak of reshaping life it makes me lose my self-control and I fall into despair. . . .'

And later, while Russia is bursting into flames, while millions are fighting one another, while families are being sundered and loyalties split, Zhivago continues to uphold his own personal values of love, friendship and detachment. Against a huge and frightening background of lies, murder, famine and despair Zhivago bursts out irritably: 'I'll admit that you are Russia's liberators, her shining lights, that without you she would be lost, sunk in misery and ignorance, but I still don't give a damn for any of you. I don't like you and you can all go to the devil.' Why? Because as Lara says to Zhivago: 'You and I are like Adam and Eve who at the beginning of the world had nothing to cover themselves with—at the end of it you and I are just as stripped and homeless. And you and I are the last reminder of all that immeasurable greatness which has been created in the world in all the thousands of years between their time and ours, and it is in memory of all that vanished splendour that we live and love and weep and cling to each other.'

Pasternak, of course, speaks for another Russia which lives on despite sputniks, party congresses, political strains and tensions and the prosecution of the cold war. To many Russians he must appear strangely ambiguous in his detachment from the politics of state and in his passionate, sincere love of his country. He firmly believes that freedom is dawning in Russia, that the long night of the Revolution and its aftermath is drawing to a close. He may be right; it is too early to tell. In the meantime as Gerd Ruge says: 'Pasternak will live on, and his friends live on, as guardians of that magnificent humanity that we know from Russian history. They live in that still centre which is found in the eye of every hurricane.'

*Peter Hastings*



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## MONOLOGUE BY A MAN IN BLACK

*Manning Clark*

DO YOU remember Charles Hogan, the man who thought all men of good will were on his side? You must remember him at Melbourne University in the 'thirties telling his fellow-students the only hope for the world lay in a synthesis of Christ and Freud and Marx.—Well, that little swine, you do remember him, with the freckles, always patting his wavy hair with his right hand and his left hand always plunged deep in his pocket—of course you remember him,—well he turned up in Canberra towards the end of the war to teach politics to the cadets in our Department of External Affairs. And now the little goat has written a pamphlet saying he and his bosom friend John Flanagan were the victims of political reaction, with me, Grant Polkinghorne, playing the sinister rôle of *minence grise*. Of course that idea came straight from my colleague—or rather my ex-colleague John Flanagan, who I am glad to say is no longer with us in the Department.

You remember Flanagan too in Melbourne in the 'thirties, another product of an institution which seemed to exist mainly to convert theological students into rationalists, parlour pinks and free lovers. You remember him surely, short, stocky, jet black hair, spruce and tidy, teeth as clean as the enamel in the bathroom here, clean in body but not in mind. You must remember him.

Fancy having to defend myself against a man like John Flanagan. Great Scot, the man has left his vomit on the porcelain of almost every embassy in Canberra. Fancy me—Grant Polkinghorne—having to argue against a common two-pot drunkard—one, slandered by a hopeless drunken sot. But what else can you expect in a society where if you're rude to the milkman you won't get any milk?

And Hogan! Well that's the limit. But does anyone in Canberra take Hogan seriously? Fancy in this year of grace 1954 telling educated people that ours was a tragic age, because we wanted to believe—we could not bear unbelief—but were ashamed of belief. And fancy telling a group of students that the hearts of men are filled with evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live and after that they go to the dead; and that if he taught history he could make it a record of human evil. What sort of mind has a man got who talks about belief and about evil?



Only queers go on in that way. I call it damned unhealthy and I'm going to say so.

Anyhow I for one am not taken in by Hogan's claim that he has broken with the Left. The talk about belief is just a thin veneer over the old socialist poison, and damn thin too, in fact so thin that the poison keeps oozing out. He is cunning enough to cut out all references to his early career as a teacher in Melbourne when he radicalized a whole generation of students. The Security files are chock-a-block full with the names of his ex-students. What a cheek to pose now as a simple, muddle-headed fellow, tortured by the problem of belief—to put it out that a men of good will went Left in the 'thirties and to Rome in the 'fifties—as though the desires of his heart should be the measure for all men. One day, if the pressure of other work allows it I'm going to write a treatise about the hearts of these men of good will. I saw them at work in Australia in the late 'thirties and early 'forties and I'm not going to let them start again. I can help it. The people with minds like sewers—the Jews and the intellectual riff-raff—they were the ones who did the damage. They smeared reputations, put the lowest possible motive on every political action and related every event, yes even the most innocent event, to some deep-seated plan to let the rich get richer and the poor poorer.

I remember Hogan himself once telling me that the worst crime of the men of the Left was to fill the people with false hopes, to delude them into believing that happiness was possible in this world. Frankly, I couldn't care less what the people believe—except of course insofar as it affects their attitude to the rest of society. And I'm not going to let that particular sort of mud-slinging start again. Anyhow, by the time Security has finished with Flanagan he'll think twice before he slings any mud again.

It's not difficult to pick up information in our Department. Give us a child until he is seven, the Jesuits used to boast—and I say, give me a fellow-traveller on a hangover, and I'll worm anything out of him. The guilt of the fellow-traveller makes them rival the Irish as the best informers in the world. And our Department is full of them. It still stinks to Heaven with the smells they left us as a legacy, our reminder of the days when THEY ran the show, and now the only use they serve is to keep US in the picture about the comi-comms, the parlous pinks and secret Stalinists.

A fellow-traveller told me all about Flanagan and Hogan. He told me because he wanted me to know he was a more responsible

pe than they were; that, although he disapproved of the trend of events, unlike Flanagan and Hogan he did not drink with the Russians or sign peace petitions or shoot his mouth off about ending nuclear tests, or make Flanagan's mistake of assuming that all men of good will were on the Left, let alone his arrogance, his bigotry in not recognizing the right of others to decide for themselves, because as he (the fellow-traveller) put it, it was really a sign of maturity, of being an adult, not attributing the worst possible motive to every action. I felt quite queer while the fellow was making this last point. Do you know I think he was flirting with me, yes, damn it, the fellow was touting for affection almost down on his knees begging to be accepted, but I wasn't going to give him that satisfaction. So I said: 'I see,' and looked at him as though he, not Flanagan and Hogan, were on trial, and tapped my pencil on the table, and said nothing, absolutely nothing, until he left the room in great confusion. Soon I trotted down to see the Head of the Department, and told him we ought to give Security a buzz about Flanagan and the Russians, and while they were on the line let them to frighten hell out of Hogan for signing peace petitions.

But how in the name of fortune can Hogan pose as a martyr to political reaction? I remember the man saying to me once that the Left was finished in Australia, that anyone who still believed that a change in social conditions would improve human beings was a Darling Dodo of the twentieth century. Yet when we are forced, as an economy measure we didn't like, to stop him teaching the diplomatic cadets, he immediately runs off to the people on the Left and poses as the man who lost his job (it was only part of his job anyhow) because he didn't believe in a Yankee war and wasn't afraid to say so. And if anyone starts trotting out this modern psychology tripe to explain or condone his behaviour—this balderdash about our 'anxiety-ridden society' I shall scream. I'm old-fashioned enough to believe in moral responsibility. I hope the Stalinists like it when Hogan takes a glass of neat whisky in one hand—if it is after midnight it will be a tumbler full—and a volume of Dostoevsky in the other and drops on his knees and tells them the first thing they have to do is to fall down on their knees and confess they are murderers.

As for Flanagan—the Stalinists will use him for their own purposes and then kick him into the gutter as a drunkard and a degenerate. The Security people will see that he's turned down from every responsible job in Australia. He knows already that he can't get another job in the Public Service. He'll find out

soon that the Universities are too afraid to offer a job to anyone with the reputation of being a 'security risk'—and so are the schools. I remember Hogan once saying to me: 'Be kind to Flanagan—spiritually he's a sick man.'

That was shortly after the big change in Hogan. But the change didn't stop him pontificating about people. 'We should be sorry for Flanagan,' he said, 'he is a victim of the secular humanists with their idea that everything is allowable, and their theory of the mind as a tabula rasa at birth—a clean slate on which environment writes every man's character.' All stuff and nonsense of course, and I told him so at the time. No, anyone who has the misfortune to listen to Flanagan for five minutes can see what's wrong with him. I see John Flanagan as essentially a weak character—so weak that he let his mind be warped by the foul ideas put round in Melbourne after the first world war by bohemians, Jews, pacifists, socialists, anarchists and communists. Those social derelicts perverted the minds of a whole generation in Australia. They got their ideas into the schools, the universities, the newspapers—as you know even clergymen used the pulpit to propagate the poison. They ridiculed the thrifty, the frugal, the industrious, sneered at the successful, and of course they vilified the rich. Flanagan soaked up this drivel in a big way. Every time I hear men in our Department waxing enthusiastic about the Colombo Plan I smell the sewers of the 'thirties.

Thank the Lord I have never been seduced by any such piffle. Yes, when the testing-time came at the University I'm proud to say: Polkinghorne stood firm. I don't doubt these gutter-minded friends of Flanagan's have some lavatorial explanation of their own for this—something about my performance on the potty as a baby. That's the other great lie of Flanaganism, that if we all published the results of our anal eroticism in the nursery we would all be nicer to each other—that he wouldn't puke his vomit on to the porcelain of the embassies in Mugga Way, and I would stop kissing the arse of the masters.

Frankly I couldn't care less when I decided to offer my services to preserve the established order. I drifted into this position just as naturally as Flanagan flowed towards the people with a taste and a talent for destruction. If you want to know what makes society tick just watch schoolmasters, parsons, university lecturers and public servants—I mean watch the way they tie themselves in knots between social ideals, ethos, all the philanthropy and duty and Boy-Scout ideas of service, and the sludge of religious teaching on equality, all those influences which



shion the conscience of the servers of mankind—I watched them years ago tie themselves in knots between conscience and in-ination and decided on a simple remedy: don't tie the knot. And what vermin those young Lefties were at the Melbourne University in the 'thirties. I remember once in the Refectory, which they of course called the Caf, I was praising Signor Mussolini for rescuing Italy from complete anarchy, and saying that firmness was essential to save the whole of western Christendom from *stasis*, when the vermin bared their teeth. Another time I was incautious enough to discuss the magnificent recovery the British had made from the trough of the depression at a table at which the vermin predominated, and saying what a masterstroke it was to introduce the ten per cent cut, and that there hadn't been anything like it since the Seisactheia by Solon. I said you couldn't expect anything so statesmanlike here from state-school swots and Christian Brothers' products whose brains were as transparent as the alpaca coats of their teachers—that uneasy alliance of mediocrities which made up the civil service in Canberra. This time they enjoyed the joke rather than take exception to the political point I had made, because I had stooped to their level. I had become a mocker.

Some of the vermin from Melbourne followed me to Canberra in 1938 when I took up a billet in the foreign service. While putting my teeth in the service I blundered a little. At first I prattled too freely after a few sherries—and uncovered myself in a rather unguarded way. I remember one rather indiscreet performance of mine in a drawing-room where I told the company that Canberra society could be divided into heavyweights and lightweights, and I proposed to take my apéritifs with the heavyweights. I knew the vermin were in town when I heard what became of that remark!

My dress, too, made the plebs gnash their teeth, and Flanagan's team of rabble-rousers stir the sludge. I used to wear morning coat, striped trousers and spats to official receptions. Flanagan, I am told, excelled himself when he first heard of it. 'Trust that quean to wear gloves on his feet,' he said. But, thank God, none of these indiscretions was irredeemable—not like Flanagan's. I learnt quickly how to climb the slippery pole of preferment and had just managed to get my feet well off the ground when a dreadful thing happened. War was declared.

Soon the most odious people began to turn up at parties and receptions at the Hotel Canberra. The war seemed to exist to give jobs to economists and political scientists with one of those dubious doctorates from the London School of Economics.

I was surprised to find such people existed in Australia, surprised to learn too in September 1939 that to clean up the mess left by democrats, liberals and socialists the Germans, in sheer desperation, had risked using the services of a gifted megalomaniac. Why every man with a classical education knows that the health of the body politic cannot be restored by those methods. Haven't the Germans heard of Peisistratus and Marius?

I had always thought of myself as in some sense a missionary for gracious living in Canberra. Alas. At the end of 1941 the government fell. 'Put away your crystal and your sterling silver,' I said that night to my wife, 'they won't be wanted again for a generation.' The very next day, to confirm the accuracy of my prophecy, I heard that the new Minister had appointed one of those graduates from the London School of Economics to be Head of the Department. A man not lacking in talent, but crude and just as bankrupt of ideas as Flanagan, and like all those Fabians, blast their eyes, obviously itching to take control of us—body and soul. The dark thoughts which crossed my mind at the time were confirmed when I heard that Flanagan had given a party to celebrate the event, and our new Head was his guest of honour. Just my luck that the first ukase of this czar of our lives applied to dress:

In future all officers will refrain from wearing dinner suits at gatherings where they are representing the Department.

H. Baker,  
Secretary.

I roared with laughter when I read that note. Fancy a scholarship boy, a son of a state-school teacher, imagining that he could change correct dress by the stroke of a pen.

Anyhow I began, well not exactly to swim with the tide, but shall we say, to float along with it. I made concessions. I wore a belt instead of braces, a soft instead of a stiff collar, and occasionally, though only very occasionally, I undid the buttons of my coat when walking from the office to lunch at the Hotel Canberra—but I drew the line at open-neck shirts and walking with the coat slung over the arms, or, as I regret to say of our new Head, without any coat at all.

I was a fool however to make any concessions to those barbarians. I was a butt for all their jokes. Everything in the Department had to be genuinely Australian—the paintings on the wall, our speech, sentiments, even our prose style.

I remember submitting a memorandum to the Secretary on the future of the Dutch possessions in the East Indies, early in

1944. I used the traditional language of diplomacy, something like this: 'I have the honour to inform you,' my memorandum began, 'that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has certain reservations about any transfer of sovereignty in the islands adjacent to Australia at the conclusion of hostilities . . .'

Well, the Secretary slashed my chaste page with a blue pencil, and wrote in an almost illegible scrawl across the top: 'Cut the laptrap, Polk and tell us what you think of those Dutch Fascists.'

All these people lavished praise and admiration on the Russians with as much discrimination and discernment as a witch on heat. They sneered at America as the land of comics and gangsters. They patronized the English as representatives of the graveyard of liberal civilization, the prelude to their perfect society.

This association with the Russians caused me endless embarrassment. In the last quarter of 1944 the Soviet Embassy in Canberra held one dreary party after another to celebrate their victories in Europe. I just could not share the elation of the *noi polloi*, though of course I always dropped in for the odd half-hour strictly according to protocol. Flanagan, I need hardly mention, was in his element. 'Be in it Polk,' he said to me before one party, 'the drinks are free even if you don't like the company.'

And what a shambles that party was! Tobacco smoke was weaving round the imitation crystal in the chandelier when I arrived. As I shook hands with the Ambassador I bowed low and murmured: '*Mes félicitations, votre Excellence.*'

Out of the corner of my eye I could see Flanagan with a glass of vodka in one hand, a long Russian cigarette between his lips and another tucked behind his ear (cigarettes were precious currency at the time—even my tobacconist in Sydney had had to cut my quota). He made his way in an unsteady line towards me, holding his glass by the stem, with the vodka spilling out. I winced when he licked his wrist.

'Come on Polk,' he said, swaying on his heels. 'Come on, you old sod, let's drink a toast together to the greatest man of all time—Joe Stalin—the only friend the workingman ever had.'

'Thank you John, old boy,' I said, 'but perhaps we had better leave it to our hosts to propose the toasts.'

'Oh,' he said, trying unsuccessfully to be icily dignified. 'So you don't want to drink with me. All right, all right. Eh, Hogan, where's my friend Charles Hogan?—eh, Charles, come and have a drink.'



Hogan was a bit under the weather too, and wanted everyone to sing. This was still the period when drink made Hogan sloppy and affectionate. 'Come on,' he said, 'Let's sing that bit from the Ninth Symphony, you know, *'Alle Menschen werden Brüder. . .'*

'No, no, not that bullsh,' said Flanagan, 'let's teach our friends the Russkis that song about Menzies. Come on you bastards, let's sing that song about Big Bob and the depression.'

I closed my eyes, and said to myself; 'How long, O Lord, how long?' And, by God, I'm ashamed to say, even senior members of the Department took up the filthy song:

*Menzies loves us, this we know,  
For the 'Argus' tells us so,  
The unemployed to him belong:  
They are weak but he is strong.*

The singing of the chorus was even more ragged and raucous than the verse, and I noticed our hosts looked scared, glanced furtively at each other, and managed a watery smile, a very watery smile.

'*Canaille, canaille,*' I said to myself under my breath, and moved into another room just in time to see one of our Labor old-timers, you know the type with the stomach almost reaching to the knees, grog blossoms all over his face, and a cheap brown suit covered in front with food stains. He had his arms round the shoulders of a frightened little Russian, saying to him in his wheezing manner: 'Listen, I want to ask yer a serious question, that is, providin' yer don't mind.' But our Labor man didn't wait for permission. 'Tell me comrade, why is it, why are youse Russians so crook on God?'

There was a lot of boisterous laughter after that, and as I made my way back into the other room thinking that at least John Flanagan was quite pleasant to look at, I could hear the old Labor member protesting to the others: 'No, fair dinkum, I'm serious about this, fair dinkum. . . .'

I arrived back in the other room in time to hear Flanagan bawl out: 'Christ, my glass has been empty for too long. Isn't any of you bastards going to fill it up?'

'Jesus, sorry John, I didn't know your glass was empty,' and one of our younger men poured vodka into the glass, on to his hand and the carpet.

'Thanks mate,' Flanagan said, tottering on his heels like some drunken beast.

That word 'mate' sickened me. I went up to the Ambassador to pay my respects. I could only manage a formal: 'I must thank Your Excellency for such a stimulating evening.'

Those were the days of unleavened bread for me. For who could have foreseen at the end of 1944 that within ten years we should scatter our enemies like chaff before the wind—that we should have the more voluble of those Australians at that Soviet Embassy party up for public inquisition and the rest of them trembling in their shoes wondering whether they would be called?

Now believe me, no one foresaw this at the end of 1944. Why even now at the beginning of 1954 I have to rub my eyes to make sure it's true. Only last night when I was skipping up the steps of the Hotel Canberra I remembered with horror that night ten years before when the planners were holding what they called one of their 'shivoo's'. It was one of those ghastly gatherings where men with red ties and dirty finger-nails guzzled, yes literally guzzled drinks, told dirty stories (not witty stories, mark you, but excretal stories, filthy stories) and competed with each other in vilifying the members of the Opposition, the leaders of the church and the owners of our large metropolitan newspapers. Nothing was safe from those mockers—nothing sacred. I remember Hogan telling me later that men without reverence were not likely to improve the world. What worried me was that in their attempts to improve the world, everything which gave me pleasure—courtesy, breeding, elegance—would go.

I wondered then whether I could live another day with men who thought civilization meant putting a sink in every farm kitchen, and a rest room for women in every factory—men who dreamt of a day when the workers would spend every lunch hour in a hall for rest and culture instead of studying racing form or picking up tips on how to lower the trousers of their neighbours' wives.

And by God they meant it. I've seen the plans, the blue-prints as they called them, of these architects of perfect societies, these men with the modest ambition of making everyone happy. Thank God, by then my days in their company were numbered. The secretary at last told me they had decided to send me to London. And I was so relieved that I found it funny when he made a crack that this would give me a chance as he put it 'to wear my glad rags'. Everyone knew I had bought court dress shortly after my marriage. In fact the scurrilous always called it *fructus primae noctis*.

And what a joy London was! Here, instead of that depressing Canberra scene where young men with hexagonal glasses and badly-fitting suits buttonholed you at parties about such dreary subjects as the effect of fluorescent lighting on industrial fatigue, we found people interested in good clothes, good food and good

wine. We found, at last, a nanny for the children, and servants who were prepared to serve dinner at eight o'clock, instead of that mad rush at six-thirty when people wolf their food in the same way as they have already swilled their beer before the bars close at six o'clock, because the servant has some wenching appointment at the pictures at seven-forty-five. Yes, London washed the taste of Canberra out of our mouths.

After the change of Government at the end of 1949 I was recalled to Canberra. I flatter myself that this was because it was realized that my skill and experience were needed for cleaning up the mess of subversion within the Department. Picking Reds was a hobby of mine. My method was quite simple. In general anyone who tries to improve the condition of the workers is either already a Red, or likely to become one. You can be sure too that anyone who has studied history, politics or philosophy at Melbourne is red at heart. The only exceptions to this are those who go to Mass on Sunday mornings and I have known even these to be tainted. For heaven's sake don't be misled by the Student Christian Movement people: they're riddled with the poison. So are all those who've been to the London School of Economics, and though it pains me to have to say it, even the Modern Greats men at Oxford are not always free from it. Oh yes, in passing, I must mention the supreme importance of finding out the subjects of their university theses. I once removed a man from Top Secret work on our Russian files when I found out that he had written a thesis on the working classes in New South Wales between 1883 and 1900. I'm glad to say even the most sceptical acknowledged the wisdom of my action two years later when Security told the Head of the Department to label him a security risk.

Of course John Flanagan spread the story round Canberra that all my ideas came from the Americans, and particularly from my friend Sam Chandler. As a matter of fact I learnt very little from Sam Chandler on this subject. Oh, I think he said something about stopping people from discussing foreign policy—but I didn't need any hints on that subject. I've always thought that discussion was the secret weapon of the Reds—their way of sowing doubt and confusion.

By the end of 1953 I had compiled a dossier on every member of the Department—dossiers which I kept under lock and key in the bottom drawer of my filing cabinet. I suspected all along that the Head of Security had a pretty shrewd idea there was such a collection, because I was able to tell them exactly when Sebastian Sedgwick resigned from the Executive Committee



of the Council Against War and Fascism, and the month when John started to go to a psychiatrist just to see whether he could stave off the attacks of hysteria which incidentally I also knew had a long history. So it didn't come as a complete surprise when the Head of Security rang me in January of 1954 and asked me to meet him at—of all places—Cooma—you know, that place at the foot of the Australian alps.

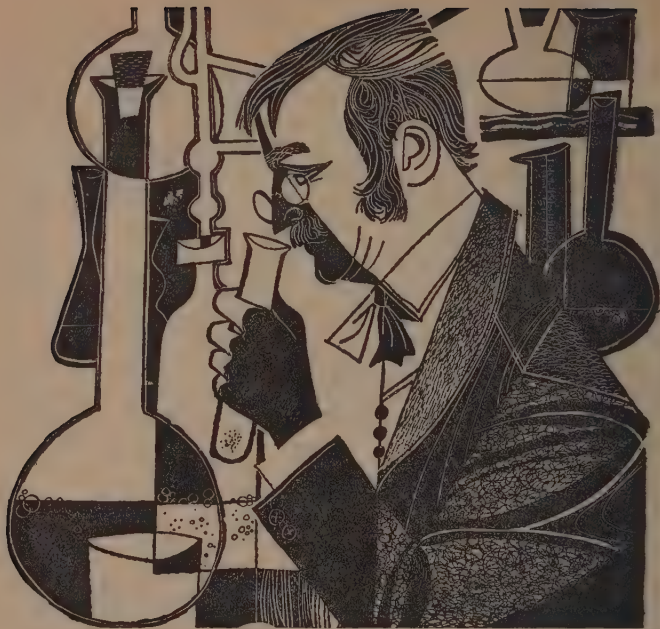
I'm not going to give you all the details of our conversation. He wanted me to tell him all I knew about the contacts between the members of our Department and the Russian Embassy in Canberra. I felt like a student who had been asked his favourite question in an examination paper. But that was nothing to my excitement a few months later when the Prime Minister announced the appointment of a Royal Commission into Russian Espionage in Australia. I rushed over to Sam Chandler to tell him the news. That was the night he showed me what Hogan had been writing about me.

At first I was livid and almost lost my grip: 'Fancy being put in the dock by that Holy Joe!' I said. But after a while the bourbon spread its glow all over my body, and I said to Sam in a quieter tone: 'Do you know, Sam, what that Hogan once had the infernal cheek to say to me? He said that Flanagan couldn't stop—that he was driven by tremendous forces, that we should pity him, rather than torment him by asking him to achieve standards he could not possibly observe.'

I felt an even warmer glow when dear old Sam told me not to let the blighter shoot me that crap, because, he said, you and I stand for something, though come to think of it, he said, I'm durned if I can put it into words. So I suggested decency, and Sam said: 'And the independence of the judiciary,' and I said: 'And the spiritual values of our civilization,' and Sam said: 'And among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' And I said: 'I believe in human dignity.' And Sam said: 'And I believe that government of the people by the people and for the people will not disappear off the face of the earth.' And I said: 'True enough, but what if the Flanagans corrupt the people. . . .' Then Sam, for once, looked pained: 'Grant,' he said, 'Don't soil our credo with his name. . . .' Then there was silence, and after a while Sam said: 'We seem to have run out of ideas. . . .' And I said: 'Yes, but we know what we stand for even if we can't put it into words.'

And Sam said: 'Sure', and then we both looked at each other and laughed.

*Manning Clark*



## The man who got colour from coal

An accident in a home-made laboratory in England in 1856 led to the discovery of aniline dyes from coal tar. Sir William Perkin was working on a purely scientific investigation into the possibility of artificially preparing quinine, when he discovered aniline (or artificial) dye. This led to the development of dyestuffs in all shades of purple, red, blue, brown and black, and played an important role in industrial development. A.P.M.—Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd.—which makes nearly all the paper and paperboard required for wrapping and packaging Australian goods, uses a large quantity of dyes each year in producing its 160 kinds of paper and 140 kinds of paperboard. Dyes play an important role in colouring the paper and paperboard sold to other manufacturers who make attractive and strong boxes, cartons and containers that are easy to handle and reduce costs here and abroad. A.P.M. is helping to make Australia self-sufficient in goods essential to national prosperity and for a high standard of living.

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## BURNING BRIGHT

*Hugh Atkinson*

IN THE hills of the Bombay Presidency, in September, after the monsoon, every fold and wrinkle of the mountains nurses a tumbling silvered stream. Flash lakes brim their banks in the brain pans of the peaks and long-legged waterbirds stop off on their migrations to rest awhile and hunt their marshy edges. The rice in the paddy is heavy at the head and the grass carpets in the jungles are a shrill and drumming green.

The wild boar is fat on roots and berries; the peacock and the junglefowl are fat on worms and lizards; the fox is fat on the peacocks and the junglefowl; the panther is fat on the fox; the yellow-eyed tiger stretches in the sunshine.

By February or March the grass carpets in the jungles are scorched off at the roots. Powdered dust blows in the brain pans of the peaks and the waterbirds are nesting in Siberia. The wild boar snuffles the withered cane root; the ribby fox stalks the stringy junglefowl and the panther waits by the drying water-hole. The yellow-eyed tiger, the hungry tiger, pads at night through the jungles; down from the peaks, out of the deep ranges, towards civilization and the settlements of man.

The crow moved uneasily on the branch of the pipal tree, shifting its weight from one leg to the other and watching the old man. Its beak hung open with the heat. The dripping tap made a drowsy sound, measuring off the little pears of water and splashing them steadily into the tub. The old man did not move. He lay back in the deckchair breathing gently, his arms by his side and his hands on his knees. The crow rose lightly, off the branch, and then folding its wings dropped out of the tree and glided in one swift movement on to the edge of the tub. It perched there, a dusty black lump of suspicion, watching the old man. Then it dipped its beak and gobbled the still water.

The pipal tree was very old. Its great shadow covered the bungalow, dappling the steep, galvanized iron roof and mantling the verandah with its shade. The bungalow had been built by the first George Ashton—the first of the Indian Ashtons—and the pipal tree had probably been there then. The bungalow hadn't aged gracefully, like the tree, full of shade and sap and branches, with its leaves knitted into bird nests and its boles cheery with squirrels. More than a hundred monsoons had swelled and soaked the timbers of the old house and more than a hundred



summers had scorched them to a tinder. The railings of the verandah were crippled and twisted the way rheumatism cripples a hand.

There had been a tall compound wall once, containing the bungalow from the jungle outside. Only parts of the stone wall remained there now, like black and broken teeth in the dead skull of a buffalo.

The big knuckled hands jumped on the old man's knees. The crow balanced itself on the tub, its wings cocked. The old man's cheek twitched and then he slammed upright, straight as a gun barrel in the chair, his lips pulled back tight over the square yellow teeth and his eyes wide and staring. His body twisted from the hips, slowly, far over to one side and a whimper, like a baby's whimper when the teething is hard, spun itself between his teeth. The crow gave a shout of alarm and fanned off, fast and low over a lump of the compound wall.

For a long time the old man sat like that, his body twisted up and his eyes staring and the whimper, like a baby's cry, spinning its threat between his teeth. Then he fell back into the pillow of the deckchair, the strong lines of his sunburned face and the tall crown of his bald sunburned head shining with grease-heavy sweat.

Motilal swung along the path that led up the flank of the mountain, moving fast. He could see the cow and the two bullocks, pearly grey Brahma cattle, hump-backed and black hoofed, cropping at the pasture a hundred feet above him. The red saucer of the sun was already dipping its rim over the ranges to the left. Motilal had stopped on his way to chase a crow-pheasant with his catapult. His father would be angry. Motilal bounded along, tapping with the old bamboo lathi the police constable had given him.

He climbed past the cattle until he was a little above them and then fitting a round stone into his catapult from a pouch in his dhoti he pulled back the rubbers and stung the bullock on the butt of the tail.

'Cholo,' he shouted, 'Ho jao! ho jao!'

The bullock started down the mountainside. Motilal charged at the cows, beating them over the rumps with the lathi.

There was a dry watercourse at the bottom of the hill. In the monsoon it was a respectable stream, fed by a waterfall. The sand and the stone of its bed was about twelve feet wide and about four feet deep where the cattle track crossed. The bullock trotted down, urged on by snap shots from Motilal's catapult. The two cows followed close behind. The last cow barely had

its head and shoulders into the dry bed of the stream when the tiger hit it. The tiger hit the cow coming up from below. The force carried her fifteen feet up the watercourse before they came down. The cow was dead before she fell, the soft underpart of the throat torn through and through by the canine teeth of the tiger, her neck dislocated by the impact of the charge.

Motilal stood as still as a stone, frozen stiff with terror. Then the saliva began to run in his mouth again and the numbness of shock lifted from his brain. He dropped the catapult and the bamboo lathi. His fingers just opened up and the lathi and the catapult dropped out. He was running and had gone some distance before he knew what was happening.

The eye of the sun had scarcely cleared the top of the ranges when old George Ashton woke next morning. He listened to the voices and the dry sibilance of bare feet shuffling in the dust outside and then he lifted the edge of the mosquito net and read the time by the French clock near his bed. It was ten minutes past six. It had been four o'clock before he had got to sleep. Someone was calling him outside. Old George Ashton lay back on the pillows looking at the top of his mosquito net. He heard a door opening in the bungalow and then the voice of Gopal, his bearer.

'Ho koin awaz katha hai?'—Who is out there?

George Ashton lay still. He moved one big hand under the sheet, up under his pyjama jacket onto his belly. With his eyes closed he kneaded his fingers in the loose skin and then gripped the belly slack in his hand and twisted until he couldn't stand the pain any more.

There wasn't much work done in the village that day. It had been a long time since a tiger had killed so close to the settlement. Panther kills were common. But the panthers seldom worried the cattle. They took goats or sometimes a calf or a pony but mostly they took dogs. The panthers preferred dog meat to anything else and in the village there were more than enough sore-eyed, razor-backed curs to go around.

Deputations waited twice more during the day at the old bungalow with the big pipal tree in the compound but they did not speak to the sahib. They spoke to Gopal and told him that the sahib was their father and their mother and would surely take his big gun and go and shoot the tiger. Gopal took their messages inside.

Old George Ashton sat in his deckchair, on the verandah, in the shade of the pipal tree, with a wild west novel propped in his lap and looked over the top of its pages to the seared brown

flanks of the hills. He put the book face down on a table after a while and began to make a cigarette in a cigarette machine. He laid the paper over the rubber rollers and shredded tobacco between his hands. It was difficult running the tobacco into the paper. His hands shook so much that tobacco threads kept spilling behind the rollers and he had to fish them out with the stick of a match. When the cigarette was rolled he put it in a holder and lit up.

For two hours he had sat there with the book opened on the same page. He had been thinking about his father. His father had been a big man, like him, and he had been an engineer, like his father. It was more than thirty years since his father had been brought in with his back broken in a fall from a horse. It didn't seem that long. A good way to die, he thought, quick and clean and doing something that you loved and were good at.

I'm dying now, the old man thought. I'm dying the slow way. Dying with a rottenness in the guts. Dying inch by inch the way a snake goes down a hole, with a stinking mess of cancer in the belly that a vulture would fly away from in disgust. I'm glad that Mary's gone, he thought, that's one good thing. It's hard and frightening and lonely dying by yourself, but I'm glad that she's not here.

Weighed sixteen stone once, the old man thought, but now look at me.

A tonga pulled up on the dusty road outside the broken compound wall. An Indian in the uniform of a police inspector got down and walked through the tangled ruin of garden.

'How are you, George?'

'Oh, not too well, Ramesh,' the old man said, 'Here, I'll get you a chair.'

'Don't worry yourself,' the Indian said quickly, 'Stay where you are.' He brought a chair and sat down close to the old man.

'Any luck?' the old man said.

'No, he's a cunning brute. I sat up over two kills but he didn't show a whisker.'

'Gopal says he's a big one, by the tracks.'

'Yes. He's a big one.'

'Are you going to try again?'

'No. I have to get back to division. That's why I called in, to say goodbye.'

'Would you stop and have a meal? It will be potluck,' the old man said.

'No thanks, George, I'm getting the afternoon train.' The inspector watched the old man, shakily lighting a new cigarette.



'It must be a bit lonely for you here, George,' he said, 'Do you ever think of going home to England?'

'No,' the old man said, 'I tried it once when I first retired but it didn't take. I've been in India too long. The pension isn't much but it's enough for me here.' He looked up the verandah. 'My grandfather built this house, you know.'

'Yes, I know, George.' The inspector laid his hand on the old man's knee. 'I'll see you next tour,' he said.

'Thanks for coming in,' the old man said.

The inspector walked away through the compound, wiping his forehead with a handkerchief. It was very hot.

In the next ten days the tiger made eight kills. Three bullocks and five buffaloes, the last two kills in daylight, an hour before sunset, in the full view of the village. The Patel of the village, the headman, rubbed arsenic into the half-eaten haunches of a kill. The tiger came back that night and finished his meal and the next night killed a young Brahma bull tethered outside a hut. He carried the young bull away, a half mile into the bush that lined a deep nulla.

Gopal brought his sahib the details of the kill and the old man sat and listened, sitting in the big whitewashed room with the tiger skins on the floor and the panther head and the sambur head on the wall and the grand piano with the rusted insides that loaned its top for the display of dim, framed photographs, set up in rows, like headstones in a graveyard.

When Gopal had left the room the old man got up and went to a cupboard and took out a long object wrapped in cloths. It was like unwrapping a mummy, getting the cloths off.

There you are, my beauty, the old man thought. He rubbed his cheek against the stock, sighting down the barrels and held the foresight on the glass eye of the panther that watched from the other wall. In a little while the foresight began to rock up and down like a countrycraft in bad weather. The old man laid the gun across his knees. His hands trembled badly.

He was sitting like that when Gopal came back with a glass of hot milk on a tray.

'Does Sahib remember what day it is tomorrow?' he asked, putting the milk on a table.

'Tomorrow?' The old man scratched his bald head. 'No, I don't know. What is it tomorrow?'

'Tomorrow is the twenty-third of February. Tomorrow is Sahib's birthday.'

The two old men stood close together.

'So it is. The twenty-third. What do you know about that?'

'I will cook a cake tomorrow,' Gopal said.

After a while the old man made a cigarette, rolling it in the cigarette machine. The blue barrels of the Holland and Holland paradox with the cast-off stock lay across his knees. He smoked and sipped the hot milk. The fact that tomorrow was his birthday seemed terribly important in some way. My head is getting all mixed up, he thought. He broke open the breech of the paradox and sighted it on the bare bulb of the overhead light. Look at that, as good as the day she was made.

We have had some times together, you and I, he thought. An idea occurred to the old man and he turned the gun around and peered at the tip of the barrels. By george, he thought, that was a near one. It was the second shot that had stopped him. The bullet had taken him clean in the mouth and when he dropped there had been blood on the end of the barrels. Another thought struck him. By george, it's the old gun's birthday, too. His father had given him the gun on his twenty-first birthday and he would be sixty-eight tomorrow—therefore the gun would be forty-seven. The thought pleased the old man. I'm getting a cake, he told the gun. I don't know what you're getting.

He felt the pain coming and clenched his teeth. After a while he got up and changed for bed. Without thinking about it he took the gun with him, into the bed, under the sheets.

The young Brahma bull had been the tiger's last kill. The nulla into which the kill had been carried was about half a mile from George Ashton's bungalow. There was a small pool, fed from a spring in a cane-brake, at the bottom of the nulla. Gopal cooked a cake for lunch on the day of the twenty-third and George Ashton ate a big plate of crumbed fried prawns which were forbidden to him by the doctor. He slept after lunch and about an hour before sundown sent Gopal with a shopping list to the bazaar.

Shortly after Gopal had left the bungalow, the old man came out and began walking in the direction of the nulla. He wore an old khaki shikar suit, a khaki hat, and carried an ammunition bag, a waterbottle and the paradox by Holland and Holland.

He rested at the head of the nulla, the walk had been hard on him, and watched for a sign. After a while he made out two vultures perched in a wild mango tree, and three more circling further down. There's the kill, the old man thought, and Mister Stripes is having his dinner. He knew the tiger was there and that the vultures were waiting for the tiger to leave. The old man loaded the barrels of the paradox and taking the high bank of the nulla, with the sun behind him, began the stalk.

It was only a few hundred yards to the cover of tamarisk that the vultures patrolled, but it seemed a long way to the old man. The jungle floor was crackling dry and when he got down to crawl he could only move a few yards at a time, before his arms began to shake and his shoulder muscles ran like water. The big heavy knuckles of one hand were chipped and bleeding from pushing the gun along, crawling on the knuckles. The pain came, too, when he was close to the tamarisk and he had to lie there on his face, using all his willpower not to whimper, until it ebbed inside him like the tide going out.

The old man saw the tiger before he saw the kill. The dying daylight picked out the black stripes there in the scorched brown earth of the nulla. The tiger was half straddled over the torn carcase of the kill, feeding in great gulps, stripping off the flesh along the backbone.

The vultures in the wild mango suddenly rose in the air, their wings whooshing. The tiger lifted his head, the red meat of the Brahma bull dripping from his jaws. He stood there, looking and listening, and then jumped lightly over the kill and disappeared. The old man had been afraid that the vultures would betray him. He lay perfectly still, listening to the tiger belching and crashing through the cane-brake. It began to get dark in the nulla. The old man collected a dry branch and some sticks, moving very carefully, and propped them up in front of him. He humped his back and swept some stones from under him and took a drink from the waterbottle. Then he stretched out with the gun in front of him, the barrels outside the screen he had built.

The old man didn't mind waiting. He had sixty-eight years to think about. There were a lot of things to go over. The moon rose pale and clear. The cicadas began their screeching.

It was the noise of a bone breaking that poked the old man from his reverie. He had been thinking about the day he won the Gentleman Riders' Cup at Ootacamaund. He could see the tiger clearly in the moonlight, his ruff shining and his jaws red with the Brahma bull's wine. The tiger was almost head on to him. The old man did not like that. The brain shot was too unsure from this angle, the brain being small and the solid, sloping skull bones capable of deflecting the heaviest bullet. The old man felt the familiar lurching excitement inside of him. He breathed short and shallow, keeping himself in control. The old man knew that he would have to be quick, once he made up his mind, before the shaking started. He put the gun to his shoulder as deliberately as he could. The oil-stained stock

was cold against his face. He balanced the foresight on the tiger's shoulder and squeezed the trigger. The gun made a terrible noise. The old man must have closed his eyes against the concussion of the heavy bullet because the tiger was on the other side of the kill when he next saw it, half on its side, roaring and kicking, bigger than the young bull he had been feeding on, turning the terrible head to bite at the pain in his shoulder. The old man sighted for the second barrel but he couldn't hold the gun still. The foresight staggered all over the nulla. The tiger stood upright, cracking the whip of his tail and roaring in pain and fury; a great, racking, haemorrhage of hate. Then it pushed into the jungle.

When his arms had steadied to a tremor the old man broke open the breech and extracted the empty cartridge, the powder smoke curling over his face. He loaded the new one home, closing the breech with a loud snap. Gopal will have heard the shot, he thought.

He took off his hat and put it beside the waterbottle and the ammunition bag.

He knew what he was going to do all along.

He stood up and brushed himself down.

He balanced the paradox in front of his body and stepped out of the cover. He could hear the tiger, growling and roaring in the cane-brake.

He's probably getting a bellyful of water, the old man thought. He stepped over the mess of the kill, torn and red and white in the moonlight. Red in the meat, white in the bone, the rope of the tether still tied to the maggoty neck.

'All right, mister,' the old man called, 'Here I come mister. Get ready.'

Straight and tall and baldheaded in the moonlight with the cicadas starting up again all round him, the old man stepped into the cane-brake. He made no attempt at caution. He breasted his way in like a swimmer into the surf. The roar of the tiger tumbled in distant echoes on the sides of the hills.

The old man put his head back. He was laughing. 'Barroooo!' he called back to the tiger.

He heard the tiger coming before he saw anything. A few seconds, like a hurricane in the cane-brake. The head with the mouth flung wide open and the eyes shining like emeralds and the tongue curled back over the great yellow teeth. The old man didn't try to put his gun up. He just tilted the barrels and fired. The terrible armature of teeth and claw took him in the belly and the chest. The impact knocked the old man



out of the cane-brake, backwards into the nulla. His feet were still in the cane. The tiger lay next to him. The tiger's backlegs were in the cane 'oo.

The old man didn't feel any pain. It was the first time in a long while that there had been no pain at all. The moon seemed very close to him. He lay and looked at it the way he used to lie in bed, looking at the top of the mosquito net.

'I'm sixty-eight today,' the old man thought. After a while his hands unclenched and the old paradox slid down between his knees. The cicadas started to screech again.

*Hugh Atkinson*


## NIGHT

*Mary Gilmore*

'The moon is gone,' the old man said,  
As he looked at the sky,  
And I, at his word,  
Was back in the bush again,  
When the world was young  
And the moon was a measure of time.

The sun might quarter the day,  
But the moon made months,  
And the months made years;  
The earth and the tides were hers  
With the man in her lap  
She seemed like a friend,  
But the sun was always alone  
And afar.

'The moon is gone,' the old man said,  
And time was snapped like a broken thread;  
Though I sat by a hearth I too was alone,  
Only the pitiless dark remained,  
The dark—and the night.



# Nothing matches BORON

A LITTLE-KNOWN, shiny-black substance, obtained from borax, has enabled scientists to solve one of the trickiest problems of space travel. The problem: how to produce a fuel packing enough power to shoot a space ship out of the earth's gravitational pull. The substance: the chemical element **boron**.

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As a result the motorist obtains these benefits; more power from the engine; improved fuel economy—because petrol wastage through faulty ignition is eliminated; cleaner oil; longer engine life.

Boron petrol is already an established favourite in the United States. Since its introduction to Australia by Ampol Petroleum Limited, early this year, it has achieved sensational popularity here. More Australian motorists are asking for Ampol Boron Special every week. All are discovering for themselves that 'NOTHING MATCHES BORON'. Why not try a tankful yourself?

## UTOPIANISM AND VITALISM IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

Vincent Buckley

IS THERE an Australian tradition—the real, central tradition of our literature? And if so, what is it? The question has lately arisen once more, through the publication of a book bearing that very title, *The Australian Tradition*, by A.A. Phillips. I remember an evening, shortly after it appeared, when four of us were invited to exchange ideas on the subject whether or not this tradition was a democratic one. As usually happens at these evenings, we all sprayed opinions around very freely, but nobody really got to grips with what the others were saying. Judah Waten, I remember, said that there was one, it was a tradition of revolutionary socialism, and it was still vital today in the works of Socialist and Communist writers. Ian Turner, a co-editor of *Overland*, spoke much of its origins in the folk-literature of the Nineteenth Century, but hardly mentioned its contemporary manifestations.

What was interesting about this evening was that we were discussing not *The Australian Tradition*, but *The Democratic Tradition*, which is apparently one stream in the larger tradition; yet most of the audience seemed to take it for granted that the democratic tradition was *the* Australian tradition. It was even whispered that a couple of writers who patently did not belong to it, such as Richardson and Patrick White, were not to be regarded as truly Australian writers at all.

What that audience took for granted is in fact a common assumption among many Australian writers and readers: that our literature is strong enough and well-enough established to have a central tradition; that this tradition is one of social justice, of mateship, of the 'dinkum', and of direct reliance on life, that is, of social realism in some sense of that term; and that writers are to be judged by their relation to this tradition.

Now, I find this contention hard to accept. It seems to me to come from a bad habit of reading into literature certain moral or social values that have previously been read into life, into Australian history. If you want to call the line from Lawson and Victor Daley down to John Morrison and John Manifold a tradition, then I would say, first, that it is too tenuous a line, in terms of achieved literary works, to merit the name 'tradition';

and, second, that if that is all that is meant by the word, I can set up at least two or three alternative 'traditions', any of which might find its backer.

But that sort of bandying of alternatives is unsatisfactory. So, I think, is the word 'tradition' itself. Any tradition which could not possibly include most of our best writers is something of an anomaly. And I know of no tradition that could be plausibly taken to include Furphy, Richardson, Herbert, Dark, Palmer, White: Brennan, Slessor, Wright, Hope, McAuley, and Douglas Stewart. So I would like to jettison this word, to say that it is question-begging and inaccurate, and to talk about lines of influence. In doing so, I shall be suggesting that, for good or bad, the chief lines of influence do not run through any conception of social realism, but are of quite a different sort.

Nor is literary nationalism the main line of influence, even though it has been a constant issue here for over eighty years. It may have had its share of effectiveness in limiting or thwarting a few talented writers. But it is less a line of influence moulding one work and passing over into another, than a climate of critical discussion and expectation. It is not at the creating end, but at the receiving end, that it tends to do its damage. If we are to look for lines of influence in Australian writing, we shall have to search attitudes, ideas, that have actually affected the creative aspirations of writers, directly and decisively. And, although nationalism has been a strong and continuing idea, I don't think it has done that.

The two chief lines of influence seem to me to be a kind of utopian humanism or insistence on the soul's radical innocence, and a kind of vitalism, or insistence on releasing the basic powers of life. These two seem to me as strong lines as we can find in any fairly recent literature; and where they cross, as they sometimes do, they don't merely cross, but become entangled. It is they which have given so much plausibility to the nationalist contentions, even where nationalist critics complain of such 'vitalist' poets as Hugh McCrae that their poetry is un-Australian, that their Pans and satyrs are letting the side down.

As Vance Palmer has clearly shown in his book, *The Legend of the Nineties*, one of the things that motivated thinking Australians throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the idea of a perfect, a perfectly new, a perfectly vital society. And he attributes the temporary hiatus in our literary development between 1895 and the First Great War to the shock that followed this aspiration's meeting the hard social facts of the 'nineties; the depression, the breaking of the strikes, the failure



of the shearers' gesture of revolt. Victor Daley had this aspiration; so did Lawson and Furphy and, later, O'Dowd. From one aspect, it is the result of a belief in social evolution; from another, it is the expression of a primitive or transferred religious aspiration to be washed clean, purified by the lustrations of history.

Furphy is the first who may be called in evidence. In *Such is Life*, we are suddenly given a long meditation on the 'real' Australia and its almost apocalyptic potentialities.

'It is not in our cities or townships, it is not in our agricultural or mining areas, that the Australian attains full consciousness of his own nationality; it is in places like this, and as clearly here as at the centre of the continent. To me the monotonous variety of this interminable scrub has a charm of its own; so grave, subdued, self-centred; so alien to the genial appeal of more winsome landscape, or the assertive grandeur of mountain and gorge. To me this wayward diversity of spontaneous plant life bespeaks an unconfined, ungauged potentiality of resource; it unveils an ideographic prophecy, painted by Nature in her Impressionist mood, to be deciphered aright only by those willing to discern through the crudeness of dawn a promise of majestic day. . . .

For this recordless land—this land of our lawful solicitude and imperative responsibility—is exempt from many a bane of territorial rather than racial impress. She is committed to no usages of petrified injustice; she is clogged by no fealty to shadowy idols, enshrined by Ignorance, and upheld by misplaced homage alone; she is cursed by no memories of fanaticism and persecution; she is innocent of hereditary national jealousy, and free from the envy of sister states.

Then think how immeasurably higher are the possibilities of a Future than the memories of any Past since history began. By comparison, the Past, though glozed beyond all semblance of truth, is a clinging heritage of canonised ignorance, brutality and baseness; a drag rather than a stimulus.'

I am not among those who think of Furphy as a dinkum dig *par excellence*, saying all the right things for Mother Australia and the outback tradition. I think of him on the contrary as a considerable novelist—potentially a great one—whose sensibility and mind were alike interesting and unusual, and contained a strongly pessimistic and paradoxical bent. But certainly what he says here is one of the strains that run throughout his work. It is a strain hardly of social realism, or of socialist ideology, but of utopian humanism given a strongly nationalist quality as well.

The same strain—in a much more clogged and unconvincing expression—recurs in the verse of Bernard O'Dowd, whom we can take, for all practical purposes, as being a later writer than Furphy. Furphy was, as we know, well gone in middle age when he wrote *Such is Life*. O'Dowd's attitudes were formed by, rather than helped to form the militant climate of his day.

We can see the wilful nature of his utopianism in the well-known sonnet 'Australia':

*Last sea-thing dredged by sailor Time from Space,  
Are you a drift Sargasso, where the West  
In halcyon calm rebuilds her fatal nest?  
Or Delos of a coming Sun-God's race?  
Are you for Light, and trimmed, with oil in place,  
Or but a Will o' Wisp on Marshy quest?  
A new demesne for Mammon to infest?  
Or lurks millennial Eden 'neath your face?*

*The cenotaphs of species dead elsewhere  
That in your limits leap and swim and fly,  
Or trail uncanny harp-strings from your trees,  
Mix omens with the auguries that dare  
To plant the Cross upon your forehead sky,  
A virgin helpmate Ocean at your knees.*

As poetry it seems to me hardly to exist; but the strain is there, and, as a dozen memoirs and nostalgic critical comments can testify, it has been influential down to our own day. Later still, he associates this utopian humanism with the beauty of the bush:

*When, now, they say 'The Bush!', I see the top  
Delicate amber leaflings of the gum  
Flutter, or flocks of screaming green leeks drop  
Silent, where in the shining morning hum  
The gleaning bees for honey-scented hours  
'Mid labyrinthine leaves and white gum flowers.  
Cantering midnight hoofs are nearing, nearing,  
The straining bullocks flick the harpy flies,  
The 'hatter' weeds his melancholy clearing,  
The distant cow-bell tinkles o'er the rise.*

*You are the brooding comrade of our way,  
Whispering rumour of a new Unknown,  
Moulding us white ideals to obey,  
Steeping whate'er we learn in lore our own,  
And freshening with unpolluted light  
The squalid city's day and pallid night  
Till we become ourselves distinct, Australian,  
(Your native lightning charging blood and nerve),  
Stripped to the soul of borrowed garments, alien  
To that approaching Shape of God you serve.*

It is in this poem, I think, that O'Dowd gets nearest to giving some real sense of the utopia he believes in, instead of merely delivering himself of a few random gestures in the direction of it. We may notice how the theme is imaged in the mention of 'freshening with unpolluted light', a reference which carries us back to Furphy's emphasis on landscape, with its broad and daylight qualities. Nature is not to be merely the context for, she is to be a co-operating factor in the creation of a new civilization, about which the imagery of freshness and breadth and light seems to emerge spontaneously. But O'Dowd's emphasis carries us forward to later writers in a way that Furphy's, perhaps, doesn't. His mood is lyrical as well as prophetic; he seeks consolation and renewal in nature; she is to be for him a nurse as well as a womb or matrix. In a way, the lyrical has already begun to triumph over the prophetic. We can set the constant tenor of the bush, and its freshening consolations, against the stern-jawed stance which he adopts in his prose-essay, *Poetry Militant*, a title which might delight the heart of Mr Judah Waten, but which in fact is a rather curious secularizing of a conventional Catholic terminology about the Church.

This strain of utopian humanism existed, then, around the turn of the century, and lingered on into the later works of poets who were formed about that time. Can we say, however, that it persists in the work of more recent writers, persists strongly enough to enable us to see it as a line of influence?

I think we can, though we ought to take note of certain changes in attitude that must affect the confidence with which we say it. Mary Gilmore, for example, is another member of this (shall I say?) oldest generation of Australian writers whose poetry looks to utopia as a solution. In her case, of course, the emphasis is different from Furphy's or O'Dowd's. She expresses in her poetry the dream of a society which is as complete and simple as a lyric. And I think it is significant that her work has been hailed newly by every generation. It would be hard to account for this in terms of its intrinsic poetic value; for it seems to me a very inferior kind of lyric. But there does seem to be some way in which its very limpidity and seeming unself-consciousness, its demand for completion, get an answer from the responses of many Australians in each succeeding generation. It is not merely the historical aura of her name, or of her affiliations with William Lane and his fated expedition to Paraguay. It is something in the poetry itself; I think it is the note of the utopian, acceptable now in the vague and oversimplified context

of the lyric in a way it wouldn't be if expressed by a contemporary poet as O'Dowd expressed it even thirty or forty years ago.

We are still gauche enough, still insufficiently self-recollected to yearn for the vague-utopian; the lyrical garnish makes this palatable, where we might abhor the sauce of prophecy.

Yet, insofar as the dream of a utopia persists in later writers, the attitude of a utopian humanism, it persists, I think, in a greatly altered, indeed in an inverted form. It has become not prophetic, but lyrical. Because the world has grown more and more complex, the dream can't exist in trumpeted declarations, as those who have recently tried it have shown; it must be presented in a lyrical mode, with a lyrical nostalgia, which disguises its original strength. Who now believes in utopia, in the sense of belief, and the sense of utopia, that could have been applied to Furphy or O'Dowd? No one. And since utopia as such has become impossible to believe in, many of our writers turn to the consideration of substitute-utopias. Generally, they are influenced to do so by that original, swaggering, buffeting vision of a long-gone generation; but they are not influenced to do it in the same way. And, while they are influenced by the visionary insistence of that generation, they no doubt don't think of their work in terms of vision, but in terms of realism: a lyrical realism, perhaps, in some cases, but a realism nevertheless. Realism is a modish praise-word of Australian criticism; 'vision' is a word that is taken out and dusted only when tribute is to be paid to the work, the indefeasible and irrecoverable work, of writers whom even the realists hardly any longer believe in.

One of the manifestations of this inverted utopianism is the insistence on the self-contained, abiding life that can be lived by communities in touch with the earth. There is a strong sense of this in Vance Palmer's *The Passage*, though there are other things as well. It comes out, too, in Leonard Mann's *Mountain Flat*, where the stress falls on the essential innocence of the community, and the ease of communication, even communion, among its members. And it (or its slightly queer grand-nephew, for it is turning peculiarly all the time as the line of succession grows) appears in Kylie Tennant's *The Honey Flow* and Eve Langley's *Pea-Pickers* and *The White Topee*, in the form of an even more drastic separation from society as most of us know it and live in it. In Eve Langley's work, particularly, the lyricism becomes more and more excited; it is now a lyricism excited by a real or fancied state of fundamental unity with nature, in communion with a few others of the elect. Here



the urge towards a utopia looks like its opposite, an escape from the manifold cares of building a utopia. But it is utopian, just the same.

The most interesting case of all is the development of Eleanor Dark. She is the most interesting because she is perhaps the best of all the later writers I have mentioned. We can trace in her a development from a preoccupation with the humanist utopia on a level, in terms, shared by Furphy and O'Dowd, to a preoccupation with the primal integrity of Australia as a place—a preoccupation—not very far removed from the primitive animism of the Jindyworobaks. In *Prelude to Christopher*, there is a constant preoccupation with the failure of the Lane experiment in Paraguay, rather dimmed by a somewhat colourless mist of eugenics; and it is a preoccupation with failure that, at crucial moments, opens up discussion on the possibilities of the experiment so that we are left in the end with Eleanor Dark's attitude remaining unsolved as an attitude, remaining as an intellectual dilemma. This is a kind of honesty we should not have found entirely unexpected in her, for she is Dowell O'Reilly's daughter. In *Return to Coolami*, what draws the tense and emotionally burdened family through the dangerous details of their drive is the attraction of Coolami, the cleansing, heartening quality of the place, and the ethos of comforting nature which it embodies. At one moment we think the attraction is mere nostalgia, at another we are persuaded of its capacity really to heal and hearten. In *Sun Across the Sky*, the values of great art are used to give plausibility (and they do give plausibility) to the ideal of the uncontaminated 'natural community', which the forces of ignorance and greed are trying always to contaminate, and which they end in destroying. And in *The Timeless Land*, it is the roots themselves she tries to discover, the strength of the land itself, given imaginative life in the animistic attitudes of the aborigines. The restless search has ended in complacency, the complacency of an immersion in the primitive and the pre-historical.

Eleanor Dark is far from being a negligible writer; and I can't help finding something greatly significant in her journey, even if, or rather especially since, it ended in what I consider imaginative failure.<sup>1</sup> The search for the significance of the utopia of Furphy and O'Dowd, influenced surely by Furphy and O'Dowd, has ended in a nostalgic re-reading of pre-history, which puts utopia in the past and makes it inaccessible to the

<sup>1</sup> Her best novel, *Waterway*, probably provides an exception to the line of devolution I have sketched.

European consciousness. The line of influence is there; the idea of utopian humanism has had its long-term effect. The result is failure.

All this, of course, is not 'realism'; it is something else. Leonard Mann's *Mountain Flat*, Eve Langley's *The White Topee*, are a sentimentalizing of the isolated settlement-utopia or the utopia of the isolated self. It is Patrick White who, in that unsatisfying book, *Happy Valley*, takes an isolated settlement (isolated, moreover, in the snow country) and recounts its sociological being, brings a realistic view to bear on it and reveals what it's made of. The result is far from idyllic. The works of the other writers—Mann, Eve Langley, Kylie Tennant—are in the convention of the idyll.

It is not, of course, in Cyril Brown's term 'writing for Australia'—engaging in the inward creative struggle in order to earn a pat on the head from the Great Earth-Mother. In the best of them—certainly in Palmer and Eleanor Dark—there is a genuine creative exploration; but even in their works it seems to be backed by a relatively low imaginative pressure. There is a tendency, that is, to surrender to the lyrical emotion. The utopian aspiration, as it has been passed on from Furphy, has lost a certain power, a certain forward movement, a certain comprehensiveness, a certain realism. It has tended to surrender to the lyricism of the isolated community or of the isolated, ecstatic sensibility.

It has become, in other words, less humanist; and if still utopian, it is not a utopia for everyone. It is close to a Rousseauistic dream of innocence being realized outside the demands of what most of us recognize as society. Furphy, and even O'Dowd, looked for an idyllic state in and for society as a whole: though neither of them revealed how in fact that was to be achieved.

Is this echo of the earlier writers too inverted altogether to be described as a line of influence? I don't think so. It is a European tradition of a necessarily ambiguous kind mediated, almost certainly, not by direct influence from European ideas, but through other, former Australian writers.

But as it ceases to be humanist, in the sense I have suggested, it is coming more and more to merge with the other stream, to join the other line of influence I want to mention. That line I have called vitalism.

Vitalism may take different forms. It may be an insistence on the almost metaphysical status of sheer *Will*, a mental energy working beyond moral considerations, beyond Good and Evil.

It may be a Bergsonian sort of reliance on the power of an evolving nature, which man must co-operate with. It may be a mental or aesthetic Dionysianism which never gets very close to the flesh it is always talking about. And it may be a reliance on the supreme importance of the moment, on joyful self-expression, on impulse and sensation, with an overture played by an orchestra of resuscitated Pagan deities.

All of these had their adherents in the Renaissance. And all of them have a history of power and suggestiveness since the Romantic movement convulsed Europe. I can quite see how Australians, the inhabitants of a young country, pushing her way into history, could naturally adopt the first kind, the exaltation of the will. I can even see how (Pagan deities apart) a nation of sun-bathers would produce poets who might revel in the last, the most sun-drenched and jolly. But my mind boggles at the evolutionary vitalism of William Baylebridge, or the mental and aesthetic Dionysianism of Norman Lindsay: 'sex in the head', as D.H.Lawrence might have scornfully called it, and probably did. Perhaps the reason lies in A.D.Hope's line: 'They call her a young country, but they lie.' Perhaps we have not made anything new, but merely intone, with a determinedly Australian accent, the liturgies of ancient fads. Personally, I think it is this line of influence, the vitalist, which, in its varying manifestations, has been the chief formative influence in our literature. And I can't here give it anything like the attention it needs. That is a matter for prolonged study. Here I can make only a few suggestions. But a line that has, in its first strand, influenced Brennan, A.D.Hope, and H.H.Richardson; in its second William Baylebridge, O'Dowd and perhaps Judith Wright; in its third and fourth, Norman Lindsay and Hugh McCrae, with all their followers, from Slessor to Ray Mathew, and from FitzGerald to Douglas Stewart: such a line is a very strong one indeed.

Brennan, Hope and Richardson, for example, are all plainly drawn to a metaphysic of the Will derived from Nietzsche, and all of them tend to set up the artist as a metaphysical hero, even as the chief value, against the universe. Of course, their attitudes differ, vastly more than I may seem to be suggesting; and there is a certain complacency in Richardson's attitude which is counterbalanced by a certain agony in Brennan and Hope. I am not thinking only of Brennan's line—

*Out beyond good and evil are we blown*

but of his whole conception of the Wanderer as the metaphysical adventurer who in his journey through the night asserts the value

of his own will, his own integrity, his own exploration—not only against the conventionality of most lives, but also against the blindness of the Night-world itself.

Richardson's attitude is different; and I feel that, in its anti-philistinism, it has something of the philistine about it. There is something complacent, some hollowness, some lack of an appropriate inward struggle, in her exaltation of the genius-type above ordinary mortals. Hope's attitude, on the other hand, has in it something theological, something almost Calvinist: the note of election. The artist for him is more of a representative being than he is for Brennan or Richardson; he is representative, and he is elected less certainly into glory, than into struggle, contingency, the power of self-damning.

However, it is necessary to be very cursory in my references. What is fascinating and significant about the vitalism of these three writers is the fact that it centres on the artist and his role. It is an exclusive, not a comprehensive, virtue that is pointed to; there is an element in it of the elect, the endowed, the fated. If it is vitalism, it is vitalism on a metaphysical level, or derived from a metaphysical preoccupation. It is not a vitalism that has very much to do with the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. We can see this agonized note of having-been-selected even more clearly in Hope's poetry than in Brennan's.

Compared with Brennan or Hope, William Baylebridge doesn't exist, either as a poet or as a man informed with ideas. I mention him here only because he is the clearest example we have of the evolutionary vitalist, the man who sees the universe evolving to its final, unflawed exemplar. As Frederick T. Macartney says of Baylebridge, in an article ironically entitled 'The Originality of William Baylebridge': 'Hegel, Nietzsche, and Bergson; these three—and the greatest of these is Baylebridge, wearing their old school ties.'

But the line of influence which we would tend naturally to think of when the word 'vitalism' is mentioned is that pseudo-Dionysian strain whose prophet is Norman Lindsay, and whose devotees in the literature of the past forty years have been legion. It is, of course, an anti-intellectual piece of nervous excitement which has very little claim to be discussed in terms of its ideas. If Norman Lindsay hadn't succeeded in both impressing a group of talented disciples with the force of his personality and shocking the wowsers into counter-measures, it mightn't have lasted more than ten minutes or ten days in the history of Australian literature. Certainly, I can't see that Lindsay himself has much in the way of creative art to show in support



of his prophecy. The judgment passed on him by A.G. Stephens on first seeing his drawings seems to me to remain valid. In fact, it has gained force with the years. But he *has* written his book, *Creative Effort in Australia*, which appeared in 1920, and which was to become at once a Bible and a Summa Contra Gentiles. And he was the force behind the magazine, *Vision*, which ran for four issues in 1923, and which included among its contributors Jack Lindsay and Kenneth Slessor. It influenced a critic like P.R. Stephensen, who gives some account of the relevant events in his beautifully produced little booklet, *Kookaburra and Satyrs*, and who was plainly still very much under its influence when he wrote that very curious work, *The Foundations of Culture in Australia*. It had the co-operation of Hugh McCrae, whose stocks the Lindsay group did much to boost. And it has had a lasting, and in some cases decisive effect on the work of such poets as R.D. FitzGerald, Douglas Stewart and Ray Mathew. A line of influence of such persistence and strength must be accounted a force; so it may be apposite to quote some examples of the sort of thing Norman Lindsay found it necessary to say in Australia of the 'twenties.

'Search for all that common minds reject as useless to the struggle for Existence, and you will find all that serves Life.

At its highest, where does one find man's effort trend away from the struggle for existence?

In Creative art.

A statement so intrinsically aristocratic must be repudiated by all common minds. That is understood.

Hitherto, all efforts to express morality have been democratic. Even those who have announced an aristocratic ideal have presumed that it must concern the Few imposing their will on the Many. But such ideals are political, not moral. The religious impulse though it demands an aristocracy of the Elect, does so with the democratic cry that all men are equal in the sight of God.'

It is a Dionysian aristocracy that is needed, apparently. And it is Lindsay who, apparently, will undertake the creation of a peerage. Invoking Nietzsche, he says:—

'The Greek had willed the higher effort once—could not the future will it also? But in whose hands place the mission of regeneration? In those of the thinker? No, he may create the idea, he cannot put it into action. The very necessity of action, if the event touches an earthly issue, finds its solution in the man of action.

If the stupid, blind, resentful mob could not find a direction, it must be given one. And the end of that direction must be to create a great tradition of earthly life, to offer the highest achievement to effort, to build the great and enduring Human State.

At intervals the earth has seen certain men rise by an indomitable power of will and personality, who have been able to impose themselves on their kind as leaders and masters. These alone among all the types

of human effort have been able briefly to shape the conditions of the state which they command. Then it must be to one of these, some future conqueror with a great human ideal, that one offered the mission of forcing mankind to become upright, courageous, strong and beautiful.'

In one respect, he finds this view of Nietzsche's unrealistic. For it is not the man of action, but the artist, who must get and exercise power. And his art, if it is to be truly 'creative', will be an intensely physical art:

'Art, where it touches the most vital of all issues, which is sex, the stimulus of Life's rebirth, will be frank, licentious, shameless, seeking every image which may emphasize the gesture of desire, adoring the naked body, surrounding it with emblems of happiness, strength, courage,—in short, will impose on the mind that embrace in passion which may be transferred to the embrace of the body.'

There is much more of this, much much more of it; it is almost incredible how repetitive the book is, how boringly prolonged; and how extended and faintly hysterical the epigrams and dicta are. How could this *mélange* of the incoherent half-truth and the adolescent fantasy have influenced such poets as Slessor, FitzGerald, and Douglas Stewart? I think the answer is that, mixed up with all the prophetic nonsense, there are a couple of important emphases: the emphasis on individual vision as the informing power of any art, and the emphasis on gaiety as a quality of great art ('The truly brave souls are the Gay souls. They not only accept the hardness of Life, they bring to acceptance the gift of cheerfulness.') These emphases, together with the emphasis on the goodness of the physical world, might justly appeal to young poets in a country virtually without a literature; the shallowness and the vagueness of the prescription would not perhaps have been too evident. Still, one is surprised to find the influence lasting so stubbornly; because it is mixed up not only with the prophetic clap-trap but also with a scorn for ordinary human beings, an unbalanced hatred of Christianity, and an anti-Semitism which might be almost amusing if it weren't so repulsive. (He despises Christ, for example, for being a Jew; and he dismisses Christianity as the second-rate, second-hand mouthings of a Jew who at best 'was only half intelligent, a feminine mind, excited, suffering and sentimental'; and 'In truth, what higher message could one expect from the mind of a Jew?')

Well, there it is: the call to invite Dionysus to Australia; and it has run a long course, changing its emphases of course in the process. No one would accuse the FitzGerald who wrote 'Fifth Day', or the Stewart who wrote 'Brindabella' and 'The Silkworms', of the kind of exaggerated messianism, the megalomania

that was at the core of Lindsay's alleged 'aesthetic'. But in so far as anything became their creed, it was the creed of Lindsay's vitalism, from which each of them took what he felt he needed. Such picking and choosing can, of course, be dangerous. A very young poet may feel that he can't digest the meat of gaiety and physicality without the prophetic wine. Fortunately, Fitzgerald and Stewart have been strong enough to find their antidote in the sanity of their own calm acceptance of life.

But it would not be wise to under-estimate the strength of this, the most deceptive of the strands in the line of influence I have called 'vitalism'. For it was treated by its devotees not only as a cult but as a crusade, and it has been tiresomely propagandized for: as P.R.Stephensen says:—

'The "Lindsay Aesthetic", as I may term it, a practical application of Nietzschean ideas in the Twentieth Century, was antichristian, a Crusade in reverse. As such, it was a proselytizing cult, based on "the trans-valuation of all values". By means of the Fanfrolico Press books, Norman's ideas, as elaborated by Jack, were to be propagated, and also exemplified. . . . There was also an Idea to express, and typography was to be brought into the service of that idea. The Fanfrolico Press had a policy, indeed, a "mission". This differentiated its productions from those of other Fine Presses of its period, and since.'

It is amusing to learn from Stephensen that D.H.Lawrence had rather a distaste for the Lindsay ideas, and refused to publish with Stephensen's press on the grounds of this distaste. It beats me how anyone could have been so insensitive to Lawrence's own work, or so wilfully stupefied by the Lindsay rhetoric, as to expect him to react in any other way. But the propaganda Stephensen speaks of as having gone on three decades ago still goes on, in the Red Pages of *The Bulletin*, and in *Southerly* (though not unmixed in both places with sager stuff). Even Bruce Muirden was made a party to it, in his gallant little snook-cocking paper, *The Austrovert*.

So I am tempted to say that, if Australian literature has a beneficent grand-uncle, it is not Karl Marx but Nietzsche, sometimes seeming to sponsor Marx, sometimes Rousseau, sometimes others. In the work of H.H.Richardson, he beams grandly as the theorist of morals and art; in Brennan and Hope, he glowers as the heroic self-damning metaphysical poet going, as Swift did, half-mad at the top; and in Lindsay and all his school he is the faintly diabolical prophet of joy and physicality, a joy and physicality that are always being talked about but seldom realized in really compelling work.

Vincent Buckley

## ACTAEON'S DEATH

*Charles Higham*

All day the horns rang out across the grove,  
All day they sought, those hounds, those naked boys,  
Like lovers engined for an hour of love  
That pungent image and that mocking voice.

Sought that blue lake, where nymphs and goddess came  
To steep their marvellous limbs in shallow light,  
Each form the crystal shaping round a flame  
That burns serene and still upon the sight . . .

All day they sped. Through brake and briared pool,  
Through hidden moss no mortal trod upon,  
Driven by the blood's thick storm, whose callous howl  
Threatened the intellect's fast-waning sun.

At last, by twilight, they espied them there,  
Those bland vessels of day, floating the wave,  
Hidden amid the webbing of their hair  
Like far-off trees in Autumn the winds crave

To sever from their gilded camouflage . . .  
So Actaeon, and all his youths, breathed sweet  
A moment, till they felt a torment rage  
And still their passion with a deeper heat.

For there were breasts that, gourd-like, seemed to rock  
In the still rain above the frozen sound,  
Tall limbs with which heroic thighs might lock,  
And tax out time upon the fallow ground,

Hands that arose like birds, instinct with death,  
Shadows of sleep and silence in white arms,  
A hopeless longing in each mocking breath,  
Within each smile, immortal, sacred calms.

What could they do but turn, those younger seekers,  
In awe, rapt by the ideal symmetry,  
And weep for guilt, as at the curling breakers  
A crippled sailor sees 'is ship go by?



But Actaeon laid down his bow, his horn,  
Drew back his shoulders, smiled, and from the shade  
Stepped out across the pattern of the lawn;  
Ambition rustled in him like a glade.

She turned, the goddess, eyes whiter than glass,  
Gazed at him there through all that space of wind,  
And, for that time she gazed, no hand could stir  
The stream which linked her mind with his own mind.

She felt her glassy solitude's deep break,  
Her mortal longings furiously stir  
That restless fire which makes a goddess take  
To learn his heart, some dying conqueror.

She cried; he flung one glance; she felt it there;  
She forced darkness into him; his knotted brow  
She longed to smooth, grew antlers out of care.  
Oh look, his manhood gutters in him now!

His royal skin grows thick, his limbs tramp  
The ground, clothed with a stark and haunted grace;  
Each eye that dares not face her, like a lamp  
Goes out, and there is midnight in his face.

They writhe, those hounds bemused all afternoon,  
Lust for the flesh, half man, half rutting stag  
That curls before them in a fatal swoon,  
Bonfired with passion, juttet to a crag,

Then leap upon him, muzzling for the feast,  
Volted with famine, as, across the lake,  
The golden throng mocks the beleaguered beast,  
Wild with a thirst they dared not let him slake.

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## THE RABAUl STRIKE

*J.K.McCarthy*

**T**O AUSTRALIANS the headline in the *South Pacific Post* of 17 October, 1958, had a familiar ring—at first glance it lacked originality—but on closer reading there was something different in the report that followed. In fact it differed a great deal from the usual newspaper report of industrial disputes for the characters were entirely new to the part.

### **BETTER PAY, CONDITIONS DEMANDED—OR RESIGNATION**

The report related not to Australians sturdily making a stand to better themselves but to the natives of Papua and New Guinea. Mr William Gavera, a man of Hanuabada and the spokesman for the Auxiliary Division of the Public Service of the Territory, had publicly voiced his group's determination to get a better go—or else. The men of the Auxiliary Division are Territorial indigenes; dissatisfied with their pay and conditions they had held a meeting and decided on direct action.

### **NATIVES ISSUE ULTIMATUM**

read the second heading in the newspaper. Politely but firmly Mr Gavera had given his views to the reporter. 'Unless we get better pay, better houses and satisfactory leave conditions we shall resign.'

Gavera's downright statement to the Press shocked the parent Public Service Association, of which the Auxiliary Division are members, for the Association was already taking constitutional action to consider the claim. As a result it is likely that the spokesman will be gently reprimanded by the Association—'It's not done, old boy, civil servants just don't issue ultimatums—and especially to the Press.'

Let us hope that the dispute will end to the satisfaction of all parties—but in any case William Gavera and his comrades are fortunate that this is 1958 and not thirty years earlier.

In those distant days when Australia's Mandate over New Guinea was recent, men who presumed to ask for increased pay—and who dared point their claim by action—took the risk of imprisonment. This is no exaggeration, as the following bit of New Guinea history will tell.

The climate of the official mind has changed much since that early Rabaul morning in 1929 when nothing disturbed the

serenity of the town except the crowing of fowl as they welcomed the coming sun. The grey of Simpson Harbour lay flat in the white morning light. The buildings of the town, enclosed within the surrounding hills, showed no sign of life, although the first rays of the sun were touching the northern slopes of Kambui. The reveille from the Police Barracks had not sounded nor had the bell that timed men to work given tongue.

Bradshaw, a clerk in a shipping company broke the peace of it all. He missed his early tea and half asleep leant over the verandah and shouted to his bachelor neighbour. 'What the hell's happened—my coon's not here and the damned stove's not even lit.' 'Me too,' replied Bill after he had come from under his mosquito net, 'my boy is gone. I'll teach the young bugger when he does come back.'

Bradshaw and Bill were not the only sufferers. At Ah Chee's Hotel no servants appeared to make the fires, prepare the baths and do the thousand and one other jobs that fall to the lot of the native in the tropics. The white manager and his Eurasian assistants waited in vain at the copra sheds for the indigenous labourers to arrive. The red face of an island schooner skipper grew purple as the wharf labourers failed to arrive and he realized that his cargo of trochus would soon begin to stink with the rising sun. At the Police Barracks Major Ayris was visibly shaken when his early morning parade was attended by only nineteen constables—the remnant of the night's guard. The barracks were empty and the sight of the neatly piled blankets and equipment, with the blue uniforms folded on top, served further to anger him. That the rifles were left behind only made it worse—the entire detachment had gone absent without leave. The lumbering 'honey-carts' of the Sanitary Department stood motionless in their yards while the pans inside them remained in a more or less immaculate state.

Slowly—and then with quick rising anger—the whites and Chinese of Rabaul began to understand. Every single native, police and workers and servants, had left them.

New Guinea's first—and up to date last—strike had begun.

Sumasuma was a man of New Ireland, dark-skinned, observant and with an intelligence to benefit from what he saw. He came of a race of fishermen that bartered their catch to the people of the hinterland. It was natural that he excelled in the element that was his ancestors'. Sumasuma was the best native master of a ship in New Guinea. He had been trained under strict masters—the Germans that had possessed the country until 1914. He was now employed by the Melanesian Company



and was known as the highly skilled and responsible master of one of their ships. His fame as a seaman had been acknowledged by the Europeans—and especially by the director of the Company—when Sumasuma had successfully sailed the vessel *Edith* through treacherous reefs after her engines had broken down. His pay was £5 per month and his keep; in those days some twenty times greater than the ordinary labourer received.

As befitted a man who was regarded by his people as a leader Sumasuma carried himself with dignity. He was slow to speak but when he did men listened. 'The best skipper and engineer we've got,' said the Director of the Company and he was to repeat this even when Sumasuma was ruined.

Sumasuma's job as a ship's master enabled him to meet, and mix as an equal with, crews of overseas vessels that called at New Guinea ports. His sailor friends included men from the neighbouring Solomon Islands, Samoa and Fiji. These men had travelled widely and many of them had visited Australia and even Europe where, they explained, 'the whiteman came from'. The alert mind of Sumasuma was quick to learn that in those places the whiteman was not regarded as a god—moreover he did his own hard work at home. The *Edith* was berthed near a tramp steamer that was loading copra at Rabaul. Sumasuma was giving a look to his ship's mooring lines when two firemen off the steamer approached him. They were tall, wiry men and one of them called to him, 'Hey, friend, would you like a drink?' He held out a bottle and by the light of the wharf's lamps Sumasuma saw that both men were black. 'No thanks,' he replied, 'and there are police about. I go to gaol if I drink.' 'Goddam it,' shouted the man with the bottle, 'you're in gaol already. You come to our ship and we'll get some coffee.'

On board the tramp Sumasuma felt that he had found friends; he learned that the firemen objected to being known as 'Africans' and called themselves Americans. He told them of his work and position but they were not impressed with either his job or pay. The sweat glistened on the black faces of the negroes as they sneered at Sumasuma. Two other negroes joined the party and the cramped fo'castle became unbearably hot. 'Why, you poor people are nothing but slaves—slaves to the bloody whites who treat you all like trash,' shouted one of the arrivals. 'There'll come the day, fella, when you'll get proper pay but, Goddam it, you'll have to force them to give it to you. It's in the Good Book,' and here he fumbled in a chest and produced a tattered Bible. 'You'll learn that whites are only men,' said the biggest of the firemen, 'but bloody poor humans. In our

country we fought and won. Look at me! I used to fight white boys for money; I'd a done it for free so as to cut 'em.' Sumasuma now understood that his thickened eyebrows were not the result of tribal markings. The man with the Bible had the last say. 'You are fools, because you are black and brown the whites make you work for nothing. If you refused to work then the whites would pay you more. Try it, son, you people must win if you act together.'

The technique of the strike began to be understood by Sumasuma and he thought about it deeply when he returned to the *Edith*. In the morning he sailed for Kavieng and for the first time in his life began to feel dissatisfied.

'The people regard me as their leader,' he thought, 'and I will lead them.' Never a man to take hasty action, Sumasuma considered ways and means. Any plan of acting alone would be crushed before it started—he must have the support of all men and particularly of the police. His memory ran back to the Nakanai rising of two years before when the police had been sent to punish the Iapogo mountain tribes that had killed four whitemen at Silanga. The spearmen had stood no chance against the rifles and many had been killed.

'If the police are on my side there is no danger,' was his conclusion. Some weeks later he invited his friend Sergeant-Major Rami down to his ship and when both had eaten he mentioned the subject. Even in civilian lavalava the Sergeant-Major was an impressive figure, and he listened carefully while Sumasuma spoke. Rami was a Manus and therefore his opinion was worth having. Tall and muscular he had a light tan skin and even out of uniform he looked the austere military leader. He spat betel over the side of the ship and wiped the red stain from his lips before he replied.

'Tell nobody else,' he said, 'for as a man of Manus I am given to think and we might hunt together. I have already thought of our poor pay and of all the things that the whiteman has while we have nothing—but the whiteman is strong and as cunning as a pig. He is dangerous and we must be careful. I must talk to my NCOs and this will take time.' Rami had spoken without apparent enthusiasm but his real feelings were of pride and rising excitement.

The reward to be gained by a simple stoppage of work impressed him and already he had decided that any movement that called for force would fail. The whiteman was too strong; he had warships and there were many other detachments of police posted throughout the Territory which could be used

against Rabaul if necessary. He remembered that his uncle had told him about the revolt at Madang forty years before. As a boy Rami had listened to the old ex-policeman's tale of the rising against the Germans and how it had been betrayed by a traitor and how many of the rebels had been shot and banished. This should not happen again—there would be a peaceful stoppage of work and in order to guard against harm the strikers would gather at the principal Mission stations. Thus would a man of the superior Manus lead the New Guinea people to prosperity. The outline of the plan was in his head by the time he reached the Barracks.

It was six days before he saw Sumasuma again.

'Do you hunt with me, Kauos?' asked Sumasuma.

'We will net the wild pig together,' replied Rami.

During the months that followed there were many meetings between the two men and gradually trusted lieutenants were introduced to the cause. The need for secrecy—death would come to the traitor or careless talker—was ever emphasized. As the weeks went on the secret was securely kept and no whisper of the plan reached the ears of European, Chinese, Eurasian or Malay.

As 1928 ended much had been accomplished. By this time the Sergeant-Major as the senior NCO of the Force had personally spoken to every NCO at the Barracks. They in turn were prepared to vouch for the loyalty of their men. On his part Sumasuma had enlisted all of the native overseers, the 'bossboys', in the town and these in turn had issued the necessary orders to the rest of the workers.

Both Sumasuma and Rami had discussed what their claims would be when once the whiteman was forced to negotiate with them. They agreed that they would demand a common wage of £12 per month for every man.

As time went on their optimism increased. The plan could not fail because this was the method used in Australia and other countries when increases in pay were required. There would be no blood shed nor trouble; just a cessation of all work for a few hours and then the whiteman would agree to pay.

To the ordinary man this was magic such as their fathers never dreamed of and both Rami and Sumasuma were given by many the deference due to sorcerers.

The plan was made, the men enlisted; all that was required was proper timing. The Sergeant-Major was given the responsibility for this. Rami watched white officialdom closely and saw the moment opportune when the Administrator, the gruff Brigadier-

General Wisdom departed Rabaul on leave. Mr Justice Wanliss, the Chief Judge and the Government Secretary, Mr H.H. Page, were also absent from the Territory and perhaps most important of all, because of his knowledge of inside native affairs, was the town Inspector of Police, Mr J.L. Taylor. Also, Christmas was approaching and all natives who had had anything at all to do with the Europeans knew that this festival was celebrated with singular heartiness by the whites at Rabaul. A week later there would be the New Year, the day for Chinese dragons to walk the streets and devils to be frightened away by fire-crackers. Even the hardest heads amongst the whites needed a day or two off to recover from such rejoicing.

Both Sumasuma and Rami agreed that the stoppage should occur very early in January, 1929.

Rami was in uniform when he called at the main wharf where the *Edith* was tied up. He wore the short blue lavalava with scalloped edges ringed with the double red stripes of the non-commissioned officer. His pipe-clayed belt with bayonet was spotless against the vivid scarlet of the cummerbund and on his short woolly hair he wore the peaked, white-topped cap with the black and gold ribbon. He slipped his cane under his left arm and carefully saluted a police officer who stood talking near the Customs shed. 'I go to see Sumasuma,' he said by way of explanation, and the officer nodded.

'Smart looking bloke, that,' said the Customs clerk. 'One of the best,' agreed the white policeman.

'I thought you had come to arrest me,' said Sumasuma, as Rami stepped on board, but the Sergeant-Major was in no mood for joking.

'In two days time we all act together. Remember, tomorrow is New Year's day. On the morning of the next day no man stays at Rabaul. We all go at dawn to the Missions. I leave it to you to get the talk around.'

The first missionaries to labour amongst the Rabaul people were the Methodists and their work had continued unceasingly since the early eighteen-seventies when the Reverend George Brown had risked his life and family to convert the cannibals of the Gazelle Peninsula to Christianity. The headquarters of the Mission was at Malaguna, a cluster of buildings containing bungalows, quarters, church, school and hospital located on the shores of the bay about two miles from the township of Rabaul. A good road, which extended a further twenty miles to join the settlement at Kokopo, connected the Methodist Mission station with Rabaul.



The Catholic Mission, which had also been established in New Britain for many years, had a station under the charge of a German Father at Rapolo, a mile further on from Malaguna.

On 2nd January, 1929, the Reverend J.H.Margetts was reading in his bungalow. It was 9 p.m. and the good man had had a busy time over Christmas and the New Year. A heavy night rain had started and the flying ants were beginning to bother him. He was thinking of bed and a well-earned rest when one of his native teachers came to the verandah and told him that some men had arrived at the Mission. 'How many and what do the travellers want?' asked the clergyman in his fluent Gunantuna. 'Not less than ten or more than twenty and they come to speak of higher wages.' Even the patience of a Methodist Missionary can be taxed at times and the Reverend Margetts must be forgiven if he muttered something about the 'awkward time some men choose to visit'.

He decided to ask for advice and telephoned the Inspector of Police at Rabaul.

Ball, an Englishman, had been only a few years in New Guinea but he had spent some time in Malaya after the First War. He had been a Guards officer and was typical of the type. An austere man, tall and thin, he was a strict disciplinarian; he also had strict ideas of fair play. His advice to Mr Margetts was that the men should be permitted to stay at the Mission for the night or they might return to their own quarters—just as they desired. Ball informed his superior, the Superintendent of Police, Colonel Walstab, of his action.

It was a pity that the night was so dark and wet otherwise the Missionary might have glanced outside his bungalow. There were not 'less than twenty' men in the Mission grounds. There were hundreds and the crowd grew each minute as more men arrived from Rabaul.

The police and workers had not waited for the dawn to begin the strike; they had finished the day's work and set out for the Mission stations during the night.

The same thing was happening at the Catholic Mission further down the road. The puzzled Father Boegershausen could not understand it. He tried to explain that the midnight Christmas Mass was the only night ceremony held by his Church. 'We will talk in the morning,' said the Father and went to bed.

The evacuation had been orderly and well carried out. After finishing his work for the day every native labourer, employee and servant had his evening meal and then under the guidance of section leaders had marched off in gangs to either one of the

Missions. At the Police Barracks the same procedure was followed. As the police came off duty they took off their uniforms and donned civilian dress. They carefully put their arms and equipment away and then departed for the Missions. Constables went first, then the NCOs and last of all, the senior man, Sergeant-Major Rami. By dawn a surprised Reverend Margetts awakened to find over a thousand men at the Mission while at the Catholic Mission the Father found an unexpected flock of two thousand.

It was at this time that Bradshaw and his friend Bill discovered that their early cup of tea would not be served that morning.

The Reverend Margetts telephoned Mr Ball and then listened to what the men had to say. Their spokesman explained that they had struck for more money and were now only awaiting the arrival of their masters so that an increased wage would be granted. Mr Margetts explained that there was little hope of this coming about. He said that the great majority of the men were indentured to their employers, having signed a contract to work for so many years at a certain rate of pay. They should abide by their agreements and if they wanted more pay then they should first of all complete their present contracts and then, before entering into new ones, ask for the additional pay.

Quite good advice. But hardly satisfactory to his listeners, many of whom had several years to serve before they would have a chance of entering into a new agreement.

At that time penal sanctions forced a native to abide by his contract. The majority of these were for three years and any neglect of duty or absenteeism, 'desertion' as it was termed, could result in a gaol penalty. On the other hand the employer was subject to legal prosecution if he failed to honour his part of the contract.

Surprisingly enough the men listened to Mr Margetts and at once agreed to accompany him back to Rabaul and return to their masters.

On the way to Rabaul the party met the Town Inspector, Mr Ball. Ball 'fell in' the native policemen who were with the crowd and marched them back to the Police Barracks. Sergeant-Major Rami was with them and he advised these police to remain quietly at the Barracks. Ball then took the Sergeant-Major to the Catholic Mission where the larger crowd were waiting. Rami, as smart as ever, kept his own part in the affair a secret from the Inspector and Ball was in complete ignorance that Rami had had anything to do with the strike.

At the Catholic Mission the attitude of the strikers was different.

There they were becoming restless and in an effort to quieten them Father Boegerhausen had celebrated two Masses.

The men refused point blank to return to Rabaul; even Rami could not move them but this was not surprising for when the Sergeant-Major spoke and told them to do so he made signs that his orders should not be obeyed.

The misled and frustrated Ball now returned to Rabaul where he reported his failure to Colonel Walstab. Aided by the Assistant District Officer, H.J.McDonald, Walstab had no difficulty in getting his orders obeyed. He went to the Mission and seeing a constable in the crowd he barked an order to 'fall in'. Long used to obeying orders the man did so and soon the rest of the police followed suit.

The bewildered workers were now left without police support. 'Be strong—remain,' shouted Sumasuma but he was left deserted. He saw his plan finally collapse when the labour manager of a company came and collected his workers. They went willingly and soon other men began to leave. The rest drifted back to their masters' quarters all that afternoon and evening.

'Hunger was beginning to bite them,' said the relieved Father Boegerhausen. The great strike, so well conceived, had lasted less than twenty-four hours.

But its quick ending was not regarded as a victory by the whites. During the day their anger had come to boiling point and amongst many this was tinged with fear. If the natives could plot in secret then they could attack the few whites. The next time they might overwhelm the town 'while the bloody Government doesn't know what's going on,' shouted one planter in a crowded bar. The hotels and the Rabaul and New Guinea Clubs were crowded with angry men that night. 'It would not have occurred during the German Government,' said Herr Paatch as he sat sipping his beer in the Deutscher Club.

Even the assaults and beatings which were carried out on the returned workers failed to abate the popular anger. Over two hundred of the police had been placed under arrest at the Barracks and reinforcements were being brought in from other districts. All of the section leaders had been clapped into the overcrowded gaol and Sumasuma and Rami had been revealed as the leaders. 'The black bastards, they should be taken out and hanged in public,' was the cry.

A few days later a public meeting was convened. It demanded the strongest penalties against the strikers and especially the ringleaders, and also looked for heads amongst the officials. Ball had never been popular for his English reserve had offended

many. 'Pommy' was then used to describe Englishmen. 'The bloody Pom looking down his nose at us; kick the bastard out,' said one rudely eloquent speaker and the mob in the hall cheered him. Colonel Walstab was also blamed. Apparently not for his action in breaking the strike but for not knowing of the plot. The dismissal of both officers was demanded.

The Minister for Home and Territories who was responsible for the administration of New Guinea did the usual thing. He ordered a Commission of Inquiry. A former Military Administrator of New Guinea, Brigadier-General T. Griffiths, duly arrived at Rabaul and proceeded to hear witnesses. 'Good old Tom,' said they who remembered him. 'He'll fix 'em.' Like all Administrators, when they finally retired from New Guinea, he was well liked.

The Griffiths Report found that the causes of the strike were:

- (1) The talk of the foreign coloured sailors;
- (2) Sumasuma;
- (3) Sergeant-Major Rami.

It briefly mentioned wages saying 'that with the development of the goldfields the demand for labour will increase, and with the increased competition it may be assumed that wages will materially increase.' This proved to be a pious hope. The wages for a carrier and labourer on the Morobe goldfields were already 10s. per month. The minimum monthly wages of a labourer were still 6s. per month when Rabaul was occupied by the Japanese thirteen years later.

Great inquiry was made into the behaviour of Colonel Walstab and Mr Ball and they were completely exonerated of the charges made against them. Ball added the final heat when he recollected that 'after all the strike is the traditional Australian way of achieving things. Why be so upset about this one?'

His listeners boiled over again in indignation.

The native police who had attended the meetings at Malaguna were summarily dealt with. Each man received six months hard labour and was dismissed from the force. The plea that they had only obeyed the orders of their NCOs and that some were newly joined recruits was given scant consideration. They had 'deserted' and the full weight of the law was given them. It was several years before the Force was recruited to full strength after those wholesale dismissals. The Criminal Code was searched so that fitting charges could be laid against the ringleaders and in the Central Court they were indicted for conspiracy. Their trial ended in their conviction and sentences of up to three years were given them.



Sumasuma and Rami were tried on similar charges. Both men realized that the result was a foregone conclusion but both proved their worth in making one last attempt to put their case before authority. 'I have done no wrong,' said Sumasuma, 'except to ask for better pay. We harmed nobody and obeyed your orders to return to our masters after we had been absent less than a day. I think that all men should have a wage of £12 a month, then we shall be happy.'

Rami looked grim but confident as he spoke in similar terms from the guarded dock. 'All I ask is that every man receive £12 a month. I have served many years in the police force. I am sorry for what I did, but still ask that all men should receive higher wages.'

Both Rami and Sumasuma received sentences of three years hard labour. Rami was shocked by the sentence. He staggered back and said, 'Oh Jesus,' but then pulled himself together as he was led away.

The prison at Rabaul was overcrowded to an alarming degree; but the bright official mind was equal to the emergency. There lay in the harbour the old iron hulk that was once the coastal steamer *Westralia*. For years she had been used as a coal-hulk. Black, rusty and stinking the relic was an affront to the beauty of Simpson Harbour.

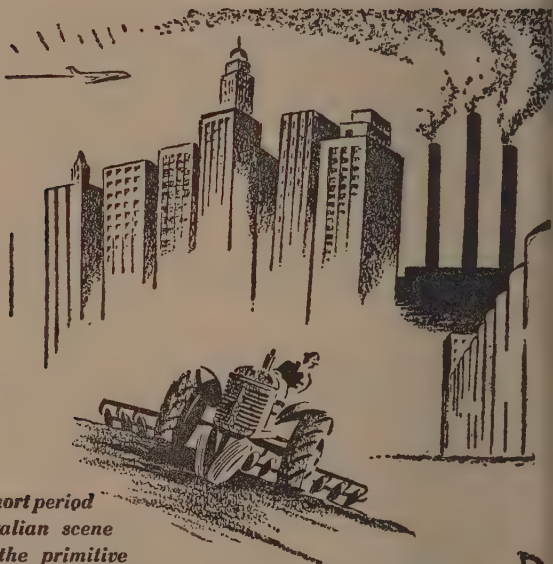
There were long lines of native prisoners standing on the wharf. Each man had had his hair cut short and each was wearing the red and white striped lavalava of the convict. A boat plied backwards and forth from the wharf to the coal-hulk and on each trip it was filled with prisoners. Amongst the last to go on board were Rami and Sumasuma. As they reached the filthy decks of the hulk which would be their home until they were transferred to prisons outside Rabaul, Sumasuma whispered, 'Oh Kauos, if all men had been strong we would have not come to this.' 'True, brother,' said Rami and he turned his head away so as not to look at the tears which had begun to run down Sumasuma's cheeks.

'Shut up that talking, you black bastards,' shouted a guard and he separated the pair so that they slept in different holds. They never saw each other again.

Years later Ball said to me, 'You know, we had the Tolpuddle Martyrs in England. One of these days the people will erect memorials to Rami and Sumasuma.'

*J.K.McCarthy*

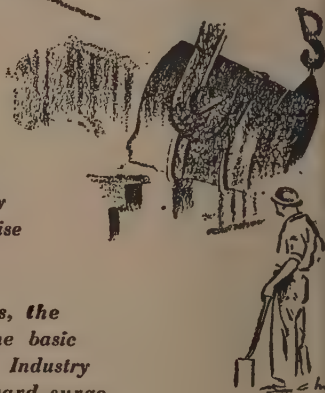
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## KING OF THE JUMBUCK-BARBERS

*D'Arcy Niland*

NED CRAVEN was king of the jumbuck-barbers. Only one man thought so and only one man ever said so. That man was Ned Craven. You had to sit up and take notice of him. He was a legend in his own lifetime, and around the galley fires today men still speak of him as the Old Larrikin—in affectionate appreciation of his japing and harmless roguery. He had simplicity, dignity, independence, a way of living that often stood him apart in power and glory from his fellow men and often branded him as a true goat among the sheep.

Ned Craven had spent a fair share of his early life with the travelling theatres, sideshows and circuses, and could adapt himself to the roles of comedian, clown, villain or swordswallower. He was an old man when I first met him, and many years had gone by since the close of his theatrical career. His last stage act had been that of a cornerman in a nigger minstrel show, but old Ned still carried on as an actor if only to perpetrate practical jokes on the handy and the deserving as he roamed aimlessly about from shearing shed to shearing shed and from one tucker track to another.

He could deceive people in many ways as to his appearance, tricking them into thinking he was much older and more broken up than was the case, all to suit his purpose and imposing nature. He could put over a sob story, even to making you believe you saw big lonely tears chasing each other down his prickly jaws and then diving off his chin to be lost in the bosom of his dirty jacket. Some people said at times they saw him drop as many tears as a cross baby. I don't know where they were looking. They were deluded. I don't think you could have made Craven's eyes run water if you rubbed them with a cut onion. He was seasoned, dry and tough as any hoopiron; and much rougher on the tongue than any bullocky.

This hatless old scamp was a sight for sore eyes as he strolled along the road, with his long ginger hair completely covering his ears and sometimes masking his eyes if the wind got up behind him. Always lumbering steadily in the rear was his old packhorse, Carbine.

He paid 7s. 6d. for the nag at the Tamworth horse sales, but he reckoned it was worth a lot more money to him. He looked at it this way, he said: Carbine carried the swag for him, and it

was much more than Ned could carry. Carbine was self-supporting and could live on the smell of an oil rag. Carbine could always get a handout among the cockies, whether it be a feed of corn and chaff or pumpkin and spuds. And always there was the free grass. Furthermore, he always had a companion, plugging along in the daytime and at night camping almost on top of him.

'What more,' Craven asked, 'does a man want for 7s. 6d.?'

I think Craven's old moke was very understanding and as hard-boiled as himself. They were two of a kind as both seemed so carefree, the world and all its troubles being the least of their worries as they trudged along the track together like two good mates. Craven had a shearing song that he was fond of singing while walking. One of the verses went this way:

*I'd like to shear five hundred sheep  
A day before I'm dead:  
I'd like to ring the ringer in  
Every flaming shed.  
I'd like to be a household name  
Wherever sheep are shorn,  
And then I'd know with every blow  
I did right to be born.*

In village, town, and shearing shed, wherever he got the ear of a listener, Craven would pour out the history of his brilliant career; numbering all the highlights among his notable achievements: the big tallies he shore, daily and weekly, the gun shearers he had outchampioned, leaving them disillusioned and despairful, the admiration and envy he had excited by his masterly handling of the bog-eye. It was no wonder he had become known, he said, as the king of the jumbuck-barbers. Only age had beaten him, he said, as it beats every man, and it was a sad thing to realize you were a nobody now with a past full of miracles.

Craven didn't have all the notoriety himself. Poor old Carbine, rich in name only, while the rest of him was the extreme opposite of the famous Carbine of the turf, yet had a fame of his own. Everywhere he went he attracted attention. People found it interesting to be able to see and count so many bones in and about the body of a living horse. Some of the bones, indeed, appeared as though they had started to grow from the outside. The pathetic old chestnut had only one eye to look out of and a sawn-off tail, high up, with a bit of unruly hair hanging on here and there in tufts to emphasize the bald patches.



That horse was all out twenty-five years of age, but Craven reckoned it had more staying power than its original namesake. In a sense it had; that is, when you thought of its age and knew how it absolutely refused to die on any occasion. The only time that Craven felt uneasy about the safety of his horse, fearing that it mightn't survive standing on all fours, was when Carbine took one of its rare fits of whinnying.

However, on such occasions, the old horse, sensing danger to its bony frame, would prop one side of its body up against a tree or fence and lean against it for support while it hideously whinnied. The whinny was totally unlike that of a horse. It was a mystery of weird sounds coming in variety as though from strange animals trapped and caught up in fear. The supporting tree needed to be more than a sapling to keep the bones in the old hide from shifting out of place and allow the creature to remain standing while it racked its body and sapped its strength in its vigorous attempts to sound off.

Craven said that Carbine always suffered with a weakness of body and a throat disorder after one of its whinnying attacks and knowingly avoided any such indulgence because of the after effects to its health.

He said that if he wanted to he could cause these attacks to his horse for a profit, for cockies would be willing to give him plenty of provisions in exchange for silent nights brought about by Craven shifting camp out of earshot. Craven said he would eat grass first rather than commercialize with his old mate.

'And let me tell you,' he used to say, 'the old galloper and me will see a lot of the old 'uns out and be at many a shearing before we give up the ghost, and when our eternal rest is due we will both die together, or within a short time of each other; and it's a pleasure for me to say that I have put more than a swag on Carbine, considering all the years I've added to his life since picking him up at the horse sales in Tamworth and helping him to forget the times beforehand when some crazy owner, and cruel with it, had overpunished the poor old quadruped, making his life a martyrdom.'

On one of his beats in the Manilla district Craven dropped in on a squatter for some rations and a camp for the night. While receiving the rations from this 'decent sort of station boss' Craven twigged a little horse paddock nearby with an abundance of grass. He asked the sheepowner if he could put his horse in the paddock for the night.

'That'll be all right,' the boss told him jocularly, 'provided you remove the carcass in the morning.'

The remark displeased Ned. Next morning, rising earlier than the station butcher and the other hands, he went to the horse paddock, let out his unhandsome fourlegger, and went up to a sheep carcass dressed and hanging in mid-air between two trees in readiness to be cut up and rationed amongst the station hands. Ned carved off a shoulder of mutton and he and his mate were on their way, but not before Ned had written a note and pinned it to the mutilated body. The note said: 'You told me to remove the carcass, but I'm a thoughtful bloke. I only took a portion.'

Another time Craven was on the spree in a village locality when the local policeman took him and Carbine into custody. Craven was locked up and the horse placed in the police paddock adjoining. It wasn't long before an attack of the whinnies seized Carbine. It was a star performance, his best to date. There was no stopping him. People started to collect on the footpath outside the police station. Finally the unnerved policeman went to the cell and bailed out Craven, telling him that he and his horse were a headache and a pain in the neck. He gave Craven five shillings to clear out of the village straightaway.

One shearing season, while on his rounds in the north-west of NSW, Craven then a middle-aged man, strolled into a shearing shed. Vacant stands were always available at this shed, for the squatter was an extremely haughty type, an extraordinary snob who regarded the men engaged in the shearing industry as foul and obnoxious but a necessary evil to have about the place at shearing time. He was known as sack-happy.

Rouseabouts as well as shearers came in for a full share of persecution, and as the shed was never fully staffed the shearing dragged monotonously through to the finish. For the men, the cut-out, with the prospect of being paid off and getting away, was more than an ordinary pleasure, while for the hateful boss their going was as enjoyable as the extermination of a million rabbits that might have overrun his land.

Craven hated the haughty as much as he detested the high-brow, and to shear sheep for this vindictive squatter was, in his opinion, to undergo a sort of crucifixion. But he needed the money. His bluchers were gone and his dungarees in tatters—the ones he wore for best, that is.

Every morning, on rising, Ned Craven would roll his blankets into a swag, take the swag to the shed and hang it on the wall near his shearing stand. This meant that he was ready for the sack at any tick of the clock; it was also intended to convey to the boss that the sack had no importance for Craven.

This swag-act went on for several days. Craven continued to shear slowly and faultily. He couldn't help either. He wasn't a fast shearer—eighty sheep a day would be his average—and he only shored cleanly when it suited him which was practically never. His low average, of course, was just a learner's average, and some squatters consider it insufficient; they won't employ a slow shearer. Craven's present boss was one who demanded that a shearer be able to shear at least one hundred sheep a day.

Yet there he was not saying a word to Craven. Craven cut the sheep. Craven bawled for tar. Craven sewed wounds. He went back after second cuts. He kicked sheep down the chute so badly shorn they shamed even himself. All the time men were being sacked all around him, better shearers than he knew how to be. He was the only shearer out of those left on the board who hadn't been told to improve his shearing.

'What's the strength of him that he don't chip me, even a little bit?' Craven asked himself. 'It's not natural.'

All this was going through his mind one morning when suddenly he became conscious of some mishap, something unusual about his shearing stand. It wasn't because the boss stood nearby with a pleased unnatural look about him as he watched Craven shearing his second sheep of the run. Quickly Ned glanced up and his suspicions were roused into an unpleasant surprise as he discovered his swag was missing from the stand. He had hardly time to remember leaving it in the mess-room after breakfast before he was listening to the boss victoriously telling him he was sacked. 'And you need not in the future apply for any employment here.'

Craven was furious. 'I knew it,' he said. 'I knew it. That's all he was waiting for, that opportunity to catch me. What narks me is that he no doubt believes he got me to settle down, feeling pretty secure, so that I finally gave away the idea of bringing the swag up to the shed. He wouldn't believe I forgot the damn thing.'

If the boss thought he had triumphed over the wrathful, crafty Craven, he was mistaken. Following the sack, Craven quickly disappeared. He made camp in a secluded spot not far from the shed, and the following morning he was busy changing his appearance into that of a blackfellow by making a few personal alterations and skilfully blackening his face and hands. After a short rehearsal he set out to stage his act at the shed where only yesterday he was Ned Craven, just another of the many-sacked shearers. Now he was George Allen, a smart-looking aborigine seeking a pen.

He noticed that the stand he shore in yesterday was still vacant, and he was sardonically keen to occupy it in preference to other vacant stands there. Five minutes after engagement Craven was flat out shearing in the old stand, not identified by anyone but regarded as rather a smart sort of darkie who promised to teach everybody a lesson in the noble art of undressing a sheep.

Craven's plan was to shear only a few sheep before making his identity known, at the same time getting in first on the vindictive boss and sacking himself. To avenge himself still more he shore in the roughest manner possible. Perspiration ran from his face. Occasionally he dabbed his sweat rag lightly to his smarting eyes. In a little while he was an awful-looking creature. Then, as he saw the boss, with a wondering expression, approaching him, Ned made his face more hideous with another swipe of the sweat rag.

The boss was about to reprimand Craven for his execrable shearing, but in looking more closely at his remarkable visage he suddenly became speechless, for Craven's face resembled neither a black man's nor a white man's, nor that of any known nationality, but was a face that was brindled in parts and piebald and mottled and spotted in other parts.

As they stood facing each other Craven was the first to break the silence with a little aboriginal gibberish.

The boss, finding his voice, said timidly: 'Who are you and what are you up to?'

Just then Craven pulled off the tight-fitting cap that had concealed his long hair, holding it in a bunch at the top of his head, and, wiping his face fully as the unkempt hair dropped down, he said triumphantly: 'I'm Ned Craven. Shore here yesterday and got the sack. You said my services would never be accepted again. You fell in the muck. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, kiss my backside, and never try to stick the dirt into Ned Craven again. We're evens.'

While the boss stood flummoxed Ned made quick his exit, happily recognizing and hastily acknowledging the shouts and cheers of the men.

Yes, indeed, Ned Craven was a character, remembered and yarned about wherever sheds and shearers are. Often he was asked tauntingly to justify the claim that he was king of the jumbuck-barbers and always he would go into the glowing fictional narrative of his prowess, adding this: 'And if what I have said of my records and tallies is not enough, look at it this way. I've been in the game fifty-five years. I've barbered



more sheep than any man in the world. I've put coats on the backs of million from the fleeces I've cut. Nobody in creation has been in and around and worked among sheep and sheepmen, shearers and sheepdogs for as long as I have. If that alone doesn't make me king of them all, then what does?'

The last time I saw Ned Craven and Carbine they were walking together down a dark road, with a few trees on each side and a blue sky overhead—an old man and an old horse, like a picture in a frame. The picture moved out of the frame and disappeared.

The frame is still there, out in the north-west.

*D'Arcy Niland*

## AUTUMNAL ODE

*Alexander Craig*

Fall, seed of hope, fall lightly without sound:  
Your tiny gleam shines equal to a star,  
For if you flower the heavens shall be drowned

With light, as with a flood. And yet men are  
So shaped, so made and marred, that each well may  
Grove as though caught in darkness. (I too mar

This image in the telling of it.) They  
Prefer the half-light. Truth is blinding and  
So lost. Why censure now the season's stay,

The season when the wind lets no tree stand  
For a bird to sing in? This hard ground can be  
Bearer of no such bloom as we demand

To rise up from its clay. No man can see  
The load on his own back, Catullus said,  
For all the sharpness of his eyes, and we

Walk shrouded in hallucination, dead  
To truth and hardly caring. Yet it seems,  
For all that I have written seen or read,

As though the sky, now blue and bright as dreams  
Here through my window-wall, could suddenly  
Burst into light more blinding than the beams

Of any sun we know, and even my  
Too-human eyes could bear it. But the night  
Creeps like a rising tide across the sky:

The drift of clouds turns dark to hide the bright  
And phosphorescent shells of stars. I know  
Truth is an abstract thing—or what is right

In any given setting. But the glow  
Of illumination too is truth. Night gives  
Its background so that seeds of light may show,

Show like the mortal dawn that, rising, drives  
The darkness from my house. I hear each sound  
As though the night were breathing, hear the lives

It shelters, and the murmur of the ground.

## CUT ROSES

*R.H. Morrison*

Deprived of morning dew, the rose,  
Severed at night,  
Awakes in martyrdom and grows  
More strangely bright.

The vase wards off the canker stain  
And wreck of time,  
And grants the strength the rose must gain  
For its last climb.

This is the victory of the flower  
Over the thorn:  
In image, in its closing hour,  
The rose reborn.

## THE WORLD'S FIRST POLICEWOMAN

*H.A.Lindsay*

AT NINE o'clock on a morning in December, 1915, two women walked into an office in Adelaide, to find it contained a second-hand table, two chairs, two pens, a large bottle of ink and nothing else. Yet in that moment history was made, for the first policewoman in the world, Miss Kate Cocks, and her assistant, Miss Annie Swan, had taken up their duties.

Shortly before this, Oslo, Norway, had appointed a woman to act as a special constable in court cases involving women and children. Sydney followed suit by giving the same status to a Miss Armfield, but Kate Cocks had the distinction of being the first member of her sex to be given the same rank and powers as male members of a police force.

The appointment was one of those innovations in which South Australia has given a lead to the rest of the Commonwealth, if not to the entire world. It was the first place on earth to introduce the secret ballot at elections and the second to grant women the vote. It built the first railway in Australia.

Adelaide was the first completely sewered city in Australia and the first municipality. Only the Hanse Towns of Germany had the modern system of land titles before Sir Robert Torrens introduced them in South Australia.

The history of the Central State reveals the probable explanation. Almost from its founding, it had people of the type who do not look around for precedents when discussing innovations or reforms—they created precedents instead. In accordance with this policy, there was no opposition worth mentioning when the advisability of appointing a woman as a police officer was under debate.

Fanny Kate Boadicea Cocks was born at Moonta and was of Cornish descent. The name 'Boadicea' suggests a stern, formidable type, but she received this name because her father, a student of history, named his children after famous figures.

Actually, Kate Cocks was tall, slender and had a gentle expression. No cinema director would have cast her for the part in a film. Educated at Quorn, she came to Adelaide with her parents when a young woman and in 1905 she was appointed school-mistress and assistant matron at the Receiving Home for State Children.

There the bathing of neglected babies and the care of young orphans showed her how much work of this type was waiting for people willing to devote their lives to the service of others. Her capable, tireless work for children who had become wards of the State soon attracted attention. Later, she was appointed the first probation officer for the State Children's Council.

When notified that she had received the appointment as the first policewoman, she was warned that there was nothing in the world to guide her in the new duties, beyond her own experience of child welfare work. She would have to make her own niche.

She did!

In South Australia, the service which she and her assistants were rendering was taken for granted by the public, but on the other side of the world some people were deeply interested. The Mayor of New York studied reports concerning the work of the women police in South Australia and decided to copy that example. Additional information was obtained from Frank Cocks, Kate's brother, who was in New York at the time, representing the Commonwealth Government.

As a result, when the New York Women Police came into existence, this force was patterned largely on the pioneer organization in South Australia. A few years later, when social welfare work was under discussion at the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva, the work of Kate Cocks and her small staff was quoted as an object lesson for other countries to follow.

One by one the other Australian states established women police and today every country in the world has them.

But anyone in search of sensational copy will seek in vain for material in the records of what Kate Cocks and her staff accomplished. They did little in the way of tracking down criminals. Their work consisted mainly in patrolling dance halls, parks, beaches and other places where young people congregate, on the lookout for girls under age. They also watched railway stations, bus terminals and wharves.

They developed a flair for detecting girls who were trying to appear over eighteen, or who had run away from home. They helped women whose husbands had deserted them and they took charge of neglected children. When they began their work, it was feared that they might be attacked in some of the places which they had to visit, so they were authorized to carry pistols. If there was thought to be any risk, male members of the force stood by, out of sight but within call.

It was found that these fears were groundless. On three occasions, Kate Cocks did carry a baton, hidden in a wrapping



of brown paper, but had no cause to use it and thereafter left it in her office. She never carried a firearm. Because their work consisted mainly of helping women, guarding children and trying to prevent young girls from wrecking their lives, the South Australian Women Police enjoyed the same immunity from molestation as did the Salvation Army woman or the Sister of Mercy.

The depression brought Kate Cocks her busiest period. She gave financial help to many people. It was thought that she had funds at her disposal for the relief of distress. She did—her own life savings and a small legacy which she had inherited. In 1935 she resigned in order to care for an invalid mother and in the next Honours List she was awarded the MBE—a somewhat niggardly reward for her outstanding work.

After her mother's death, Kate Cocks, now sixty years of age, abandoned her ambition of retiring to a small cottage in the Mount Lofty Ranges, where she could follow her hobby of nature study. Too many tasks were waiting for people of her type. The Methodist Church offered her the position of director of their newly-formed Welfare Department in Adelaide and she accepted it.

Her experience of police work had shown her that one of the most pressing needs was a home where unmarried women could go for confinements and where their infants could be cared for while the mothers were at work or until the children were adopted. This home was established but it soon became necessary to extend its scope to cover babies from broken homes or those found neglected.

Today it cares for a daily average of forty-five babies and, as it does not receive a subsidy, it has to rely on public subscriptions of at least £8000 per year to keep going.

Kate Cocks died in 1954, at the age of seventy nine. She had never carried out any brilliant feats of detection, as 'female' cops do in crime fiction. But she did leave behind her a record of a lifetime spent in humanitarian work.

The name of the institution which she had founded was changed to 'Kate Cocks's Memorial Babies' Home' to commemorate her, but there is a better memorial than this to the world's first policewoman.

Outside of the totalitarian countries, the women police of the world concentrate on the humanitarian side of law enforcement—and in so doing they carry on the methods and the ideals which were originated in South Australia by Fanny Kate Boadicea Cocks.

*H.A.Lindsay*



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# THE ASSAULT ON THE MIND

or

WHEN IN DOUBT UNDERMINE THE PATIENT

*Gwen Kelly*

RECENTLY THERE appeared a biography of Edward Sheldon, an American playwright who after an initial success became a permanent victim of arthritis. This unfortunate man was completely incapacitated and finally, owing to the ravages of his disease, went blind, a process accompanied by unbelievable agony. In spite of these misfortunes, he conducted from his bedroom a kind of literary court to which flocked writers and would-be writers for advice.

In the Victorian age, this man's triumph over his affliction would have been a thing to wonder at, a proof of the godlike spirit of man. Ours, however, is an age nurtured on popular abridgements of Freud. Perhaps, as the biographer does not fail to suggest, Mr Sheldon chose this disease as a way of escape from his failing powers as a dramatist. Knowing in his heart of hearts he could not write another masterpiece, he preferred to go to bed for the rest of his life, endure the miseries of arthritic blindness so that he could summon to his bedside the audience that would have deserted him in the theatre.

The power of the frustrated will to achieve effects of such magnitude is a comforting thought to the members of the medical profession faced with an interesting assortment of diseases ranging from fibrositis, lumbago, sciatica, to various forms of collapsed back whose origin and treatment have hitherto proved somewhat obscure. There is no need to worry about any detailed examination, psychiatric or physical, for it is now only a question of convincing the patient, who remains obdurately certain he is suffering all sorts of muscular agonies, that the disease is the product of his own unsatisfactory mental processes.

In the early stages, the patient is, of course, innocent. When I was first struck, somewhere about ten years ago with a burning pain in my shoulder extending across the equivalent section of my frontal anatomy, I rushed to a doctor convinced I was dying of pneumonia or at the very least, pleurisy. The first doctor was comforting, a little muscular discomfort, nothing serious. A small infra-red lamp, a nice aspirin mixture and I'd be right for life. Luckily it was not in my hands or feet. It was possible to cure shoulders. Not hands or feet.

For a while it seemed to work. I was sanguine in those days. As winter crept on it seemed impossible that I felt the 'discomfort' creep six or seven vertebrae lower down my back. Surely I was imagining that my arm was difficult to raise. By the time I was too stiff to move I reluctantly concluded that I should have to pay the medical profession another guinea.

I was indeed fortunate, for by this time knowledge was extending into the psychosomatic field, providing a wealth of opportunity for the enterprising practitioner. After poking me here and there while I gave the appropriate yelps he looked at me gravely and said:

'Do you worry very much?'

'Worry?' I stammered, somewhat puzzled.

'You know, about the house, money, your husband, children. I know what you mothers are like. It creates a state of tension. Very bad for the back.'

Doubt began to seep through me. Till now I had thought my worries were on the common level. There was the constantly recurring fact that our monthly income seemed to be permanently less than our monthly expenditure, but so far a bit of juggling had managed to keep the family jogging along in a state of material comfort. After all we did own a car, a house, a radio-gram. My children learnt ballet. I had thought we were comparatively well off. Apparently a mistake. My disease had betrayed us. Deep down, those monthly bills were tormenting me, reducing me to a fibrositis wreck. My anxiety appeared in my face and the doctor, a kindly man, gave my shoulder an encouraging pat.

'There,' he said: 'It happens to all of us, particularly the intelligent (my chest swelled a visible two inches). A few little tablets to help you sleep (I already slept like a log), a mixture to subdue the pain. And, by the way, make sure you take plenty of exercise. No sense in coddling yourself.'

'The pain in my leg,' I protested.

'As I was saying, a bit of exercise and a few worry free weeks will soon put that right. Now remember. No anxiety on any account.'

The next month was disastrous. Buoyed by the doctor's advice I didn't bother to pay the butcher or baker at all. After all I was an intelligent woman; I had an intelligent woman's disease. Still, there were a few disturbing factors. My husband's face at the overdue accounts was somewhat more worrying than the previous juggling had been. Then I found that the baker himself had fibrositis. It was a shock, as I had never



considered that the baker had any claim to a place in the higher IQ bracket. Maybe I was wrong: that wooden exterior must hide a turbulent mentality. My faith, however, was completely shaken when Mrs Ex up the street retired to bed with lumbago; Mrs Ex whom I had always regarded as next thing to an idiot, whose children occupied bottom place in every class at the local primary school. Could it be that the doctor was wrong? Maybe I had misheard him. Perhaps he had said 'unintelligent'.

Yet I gave the theory a fair trial. I exercised vigorously even though the pain in my leg seemed to deepen in intensity. Finally my efforts were crowned by severe sciatica brought on, according to the doctor called in for the occasion, by over-exercise. Three weeks in bed followed. I relaxed between the sheets, wallowing in the psychosomatic comfort of rest while the family waited on me hand and foot.

Unfortunately bed is not the ultimate solution, not in a house that cannot afford a permanent servant to take the place of a wife. After another eighteen months of intermittent misery in which I swallowed capsules filled with Epsom's salts because someone's mother had thrived on them and molasses hideous in flavour because they relieved Granny's pain, I trotted along to a member of the medical profession a little higher up the scale, not quite a specialist but almost. You know what I mean. 'He did such a lot for Bill's father and Joan's aunt.'

I could see that in the intervening two years medicine had progressed considerably. When he said: 'Do you worry?' I looked him straight in the eye and answered without an inflection of doubt 'No'. He probably did not believe me. The profession always holds the trump card. If you say 'yes' they are right and if you say 'no' they are right. It becomes a matter of the sub-conscious, so either way you can't win. But I have found that they hesitate to call you a liar outright and the firm 'no' usually has this result. In the final count, however, it availed me nothing. I had mastered the usual questions but I was yet proof against the unexpected.

'What,' he said, looking significant and pressing the tips of his fingers together, 'What about your sex life?'

I was startled and my face showed it. True I had always regarded the mutual joy found in one another's company as a sign that all was well between us. But perhaps I was wrong. After all, my husband was the only man with whom I had ever slept. I did sometimes wonder what other men were like. My imagination occasionally teetered on the brink of a Cleopatra-like existence. That must be it. I was secretly nurturing a

frustrated longing for a whole host of lovers, in all shapes and colours and sizes. My guilt showed in my face. Even though I finally spluttered 'satisfactory' the doctor's 'h'm' was so significant that I could no longer doubt sex lay at the bottom of every single backache. But worse was to come.

'How many children have you?' he asked.

'Two,' I faltered.

'Oh,' he said, 'Only two. Boys or girls?'

'Girls,' I muttered, 'Two girls.'

'No boys,' he said, looking wise.

'No, no boys,' I repeated, looking helpless.

'Well,' he said, 'there's a new line of sedative out. Sometimes you know frustrations of various kinds. . .'

I returned to my husband very humbled, determined to do my duty as a wife. We had tried when we were younger to enlarge our family but the fates had not blessed us. The last couple of years, we seemed to have let the matter go by default. My fibrositis proved I was to blame. My poor husband was hankering for a son and I hadn't given him one. No doubt my sub-conscious was reproaching me constantly.

After tea I watched him pull out his pipe and settle down to a book.

'If only we had a son,' I said, probing, 'You wouldn't have to mow the lawn on a Saturday.'

He looked at me in surprise.

'Bit young for lawn mowing even if we had one,' he grunted.

As he went out the following morning to chop the wood for the fire, I gazed soulfully after him.

'If only we had a son,' I said mournfully, 'He could do that for you.'

He looked at me as if I had gone mad.

'Go on,' he said.

As he prepared his work for his afternoon lecture I gazed over his shoulder.

'I suppose,' I said, 'A man would like a son to carry on when he's gone.'

'For God's sake woman,' he said, 'I have no intention of going yet, don't worry. What the hell's biting you lately?'

'Our son,' I said.

'We haven't got one,' he said.

'I know,' I said, 'That's the point.'

'I don't get it,' he said, 'We've had no son for fifteen years. Why bring it up now?'

'I thought you might like one,' I ventured.

'Why?' he said.

'I don't know,' I said. 'All men want a son, don't they? We could try.'

'We did,' he said.

'I mean try again.'

'Good God no,' he said. 'You aren't serious are you? I have two hale and hearty children, who are now reasonably intelligent to talk to and who seem capable of looking after themselves. I'm over forty. I'm looking forward to my grand-children.'

'You mean,' I said, 'You don't want a son?'

'I mean,' he roared, 'I don't want anything, son or daughter. Now will you let me go on with my work?'

I wandered away very thoughtful. Maybe I was frustrated by my husband's unreasonable attitude towards additional procreation. Maybe. But the vague flutter of relief at the back of my mind proved that I was a liar if I thought so. After all I was heading for forty, too. I settled down to concentrate on the sedative tablets. They cost 23s. a bottle. Results ought to be fast. But as the clouds banked on the horizon heralding the impending rain, my mentality obviously degenerated. The pain returned, front, side, back, leg. My husband put me to bed.

After that I grew cunning. Now when I see the medical profession I no longer say I have fibrositis; I watch closely for symptoms of an extraneous sort. Perhaps I can hit on the cure accidentally. Maybe that pain in my ear—so I go to see the doctor about the pain in my ear—I still get fibrositis. Maybe that sinus attack—I go to see the doctor about the sinus attack—I still get fibrositis. If I stay at home like a model housewife my disease is attributed to mental boredom. If I take a job the next doctor says I am trying to do too much. And so it goes on.

I have not yet given up hope. An article has now appeared suggesting that people die only because they want to do so. Amazing examples were quoted of cancer victims who remained alive when all hope had gone, simply to see some loved one who could not make the death bed before evening.

Of course the evidence was a little nebulous. There was nothing to prove they would not have remained alive even if the loved one had caught the train on time. Moreover the long line of the defunct from Amenhotep of Egypt to Stalin of Russia marched in line across my brain to suggest that after all death might be inevitable. They are certainly all dead.

But stop. I am probably rushing to hasty conclusions. They are certainly all dead but after all, who knows why they died? No doubt they had their reasons.

*Gwen Kelly*

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## THE BAY

*K.E.Read*

I SAW the bay for the first time from the deck of the ship which brought me to this north-western corner of the United States. It was an afternoon in late December—winter in these latitudes—and the grey clouds seemed to perch on the masts like resting birds. The passengers came up from the dining room muffled in coats and head scarves, and as they paced the deck or grouped themselves along the railing the penetrating wind intensified the atmosphere of expectation which always accompanies a landfall.

From the deck of a ship you view the shore and the fussy world of ports with a detachment which enhances the power of observation. Everything is spread before you in meticulous detail. You can look into the folds of hills and hanging valleys, into warehouses, quays, ploughed fields and the crawling streets of cities as easily as the eye moves from point to point in a mediaeval landscape, and with the same recurring feeling of discovery. At least it has always seemed like this to me, for the patterns of life which I have glimpsed from ships are amongst my most vivid recollections. And on this occasion I studied the shoreline with more than a tourist's interest. I was acutely aware that I stood between an end and a beginning.

I was alone on the deck which faced the American shore, for most of the passengers had gathered on the port side to await the arrival of the pilot from Vancouver Island. The empty railing, curving away from me on either side, the gulls riding the gusty wind—now sweeping to the surface of the water, now borne upwards and out of sight in the overcast—the lapping of the waves and the winter afternoon asking its unanswerable question, all these contributed a melancholy counterpoint to my mood of expectation. Once in a while the slow progression of clouds seemed to halt and to draw apart, and in these brief pauses shafts of lambent light cast their quivering illumination over rocky promontories capped with cedar and fir, the far-ranging and often solitary scouts for the forest, that vast concentration of trees—barbed like the heads of arrows—which marched down from the peaks of the invisible mountains. The rocks, the trees and the water had the pale but brilliant glow of light which lies in the translucent depths of old enamels, a light found only in lands which know the benison of cold



rains and gentle mists and streams which are burdened each year with melting snow. My heart seemed to lift in sudden recognition. Some memory seemed to stir, as though through all the years of living I had carried in my unconscious a familiar knowledge not of the precise scene but rather of similar conjunctions of moist air, of light and colour (perhaps a knowledge implanted in the same way as the hue of hair and skin and eyes which I inherit from generations of people who lived beside the North Atlantic), and now I realized my long exile under the southern sun.

At that moment the bay came into view, an arc cut in the green folds of the hills, a golden curve shining with light reflected from recent rain, as lovely as the sound of distant singing. Once in a while scene and mood are matched so perfectly that the spirit seems to constrict in sudden pain, and for a moment which is as fragile as the gleam within a crystal the mind experiences the wide swing of the universe through infinite distance. Then, as now, words have no meaning. There is only this perfect reconciliation, a knowledge which is akin to unknowing, a pain and a peace which are the essential expression of the human condition. I know now that I saw a white building—immensely bright against the barbed trees—and a jetty which cut the arc of shining water like the last note of a bird's call hanging in blue space over an empty meadow. There was a small boat moving towards the land, its bows shedding curling fragments of jade, and close to the shore I could see a grey filigree of masts where other craft rode at anchor. Behind the line of the beach there seemed to be a settlement, houses which were all of one colour—the colour of wood which has been weathered by rain and salt air. They lay comfortably close to the ground, and I knew that the breezes which blew along the invisible streets would carry the smell of kelp and of drying nets into the interiors of these dwellings. Smoke, which by its colour could come only from wood, lay like a veil above the houses, stretched so thinly that it seemed no more than a thought in the motionless air which separates one shower from another.

Detached from the surrounding landscape, this scene glittered with the marvellous brightness of water as it is flung momentarily against the light. And I did not see it for much longer than spray hangs suspended in the air. Almost before I knew it, the clouds drew together and the light went out and I was standing on the empty deck with the wind, the gulls and the last of the winter's afternoon. An impersonal voice was telling us over the public address system that the pilot had come aboard and that

passengers must have their baggage ready for disembarkation by six the following morning. I leaned against the railing while the after-image of the bay died against the overcast; then I turned to go to my cabin, oppressed by a feeling of finality.

At that time I had no idea that some six months later I would see the bay again. By then my life had entered a new and rewarding phase; and the sudden recognition which I had experienced on first glimpsing these shores had been amply fulfilled. I was in love with this soft light, the still, inland waters, the shining mountains and the changing northern skies.

When I was able to take a holiday, I began to make short excursions into the surrounding countryside, frequently visiting the Indian Reservations in the eastern portion of this State; for in this way I was able to pursue my professional interests as well as satisfying my desire to know the country better. And it was on one of these journeys that I came back to that part of the coast which I had glimpsed from the deck of the ship.

I had been invited to attend a Tribal Council meeting at the settlement of Neah Bay in the Makah Indian Reservation. When I looked at my map I saw that the Reservation occupied the extreme north-western corner of the Olympic Peninsula, a fabled wilderness of glittering lakes, of rain-forests hung with unearthly green moss, of cold snow-covered mountains and long empty beaches which lie open to the pounding waves of the Pacific. It was a part of the country I had not yet seen, so I drove slowly, staying over-night at a port on the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

The following morning was misty, with short intervals of sunlight and an occasional heavy shower; but by mid-day it had begun to clear and I could feel and smell the presence of the ocean in the wind. As I neared my destination the road ran close to the coast, and for mile after mile I could see the waters of the straits shining like pale emeralds through dark fir trees.

When I arrived at Neah Bay some few minutes later, I did not recognize it immediately as the settlement I had seen the previous winter. Of course I had only glimpsed it briefly, and then I was also looking towards the land across several miles of water. But after I had obtained a room at a frame motel on the edge of the township, I crossed a rutted street and looked down the swinging curve of a beach littered with bleached driftwood. It was then that I saw and recognized the jetty, the tall white building—carrying the sign of a fishermen's co-operative—and the masts and hulls of a myriad small craft. And as though to assure me I was not mistaken, the clouds chose that moment to cover the

sun; a light mist blew into my face, and numbers of pink-legged gulls rose from the sands to sail in their melancholy fashion on the wind.

I do not know what Neah Bay may be like in clear, bright weather, for I have not been back there again—indeed, I do not want to go back—and for the two days I remained there the skies were overcast, the straits grey and the forested headlands shrouded in mist. But I cannot help feeling that these wintry monotonies are its true expression. There is a feeling of something irrevocably lost about this place, some unspoken sadness which lies behind the brown eyes of its inhabitants, an air of diffident apology, an unease and an atmosphere of resignation.

In the salmon season the place is popular with sportsmen who want to fish but do not need luxury; for its facilities are the poorest kind—the motel and a trailer court at the entrance to the township and two eating places with windows overlooking the bay. The litter of driftwood on the beach epitomizes the air of sad neglect which hangs over the settlement. The main street—half a mile long, and the only paved street in the township—is flanked for most of its length with sidewalks which are overgrown with grass. In front of the offices of the Tribal Council a dilapidated fence encloses an area where the visitor may park his car and look across the straits towards Vancouver Island. But it is the grid-pattern of streets and houses away from the waterfront which create an almost unbearable feeling of depression. They are all frame dwellings which lack any style or distinction, mere shelters devoid of paint, weathered to an unrelieved grey and standing in weed-covered yards which are often littered with the rusting parts of automobiles. Their windows watch you like empty eyes, occasionally screened by a tattered curtain but more often reflecting the desolate light in grimy panes through which the passer-by may see an oleograph on the wall, a sideboard carrying some vases or plates which are made from the lustreless china made in curio shops around the world, a few straight-backed chairs and an untidy table.

It is impossible to walk along these streets without experiencing a haunting regret. Something in the salt air, in the resigned and withdrawn houses, in a tottering church—dedicated to one of the fundamentalist sects of a depressed minority—evokes the feeling of loss which in daily life we seek to quiet with a thousand and one interests and activities. The mind is bereft of its shield of pretences; and as though we stand in some tunnel of inner darkness, we look back longingly on a more perfect, now departed innocence. It seems as though we once knew—through some

instinctive faculty—that the essence of our human condition lies in the capacity to search, and that this alone binds us to the uncounted numbers of preceding generations. Humanity places on us a double burden: an imperious command to ask questions which our human condition cannot answer. And the tensions generated by this paradox are the feeling of life which we carry within us. But like those who devise pills to provide us with artificial tranquillity, we suppress this knowledge or deny it, falling into a comfortable acceptance or, in blaming the external world, we sign an instrument of fatal abdication.

It is not simply the poverty of these streets and buildings which evokes this feeling of distress: there are many who have less than these people have. Rather, I seem to discern some failure of nerve, a spiritual rootlessness, some fundamental abnegation of man's proper condition. It is something which cannot be put into the language of the sociologist, whose clinical perspective shows us only a single dimension. So I do not need to be reminded that the care which is lavished on its external appearance is superfluous to the essential function of a dwelling; and I do not expect to find here the suburban values espoused by the magazines of home decoration. This pragmatism will not account for the deserted houses which stand in the forlorn reservations, their empty windows and naked beams bearing witness to spoliation. And the impersonal record of historical events and social forces cannot strip away the flesh and reveal to us the tired spirit.

Yet I think I have seen that spirit: once, when I sat on a wooden bench beside the arena at a country fair and looked beyond the crowds to the circle of ochre-coloured hills where the Indians were gathering. How brave they looked as they filed down the steep path, their horses raising clouds of golden dust in which the figures sat erect like shadows; and how inexpressibly sad the real people who shortly paraded before my eyes! Even this meretricious finery—these store-bought feathers in gaudy pinks and greens, this bead-work on leggings and moccasins, these bells which rang like the ornaments on a child's Christmas stocking—did not belong to them; for this was not the original style of the Indians of this region. They had clothed themselves in the conception of the sideshow and the motion picture and presented themselves to the public with a spurious dignity which was as vulgar as the mass-produced souvenirs crowding the glass cases in a multitude of eating places. I could feel only shame for people who accepted the public misconception of their traditional culture.

I saw this spirit for a second time on an afternoon when the wind, blowing out of the vast emptiness of the ocean, raised the sand in a stinging spray and sent stones rattling against the walls of the houses. The piles of rusting machinery rose out of the flattened grasses like the bones of monsters; and behind the grimy curtains, expressionless faces looked into the wild air. Then a woman came down the street between the rows of houses. She was unattended, and moved like a climber breasting a hill: thrust forward against the gale which whipped her dark hair about her face in tortured streamers. Her features were flayed by some unbearable grief, and her arms beat at the elements like the wings of a bird which a hunter had flushed from cover. The wind fell upon her lips, shredding the sounds which issued from them; it forced itself against her lids as though to fasten her tears. As I watched, the houses seemed to shrink from her inner anguish and the curtains hanging in motionless folds were like the whites of eyes averted from something which they did not want to see.

Rain hid the straits in a grey shroud when I left Neah Bay on my return journey. The unpaved streets ran with yellow water and the mists hung like smoke in the sodden forests. If I do not want to go back again it is because I cannot close my mind to the atmosphere of malaise evoked by the settlement. Unlike others whom I know the conceptual framework of the economist or sociologist does not provide me with a sufficient explanation of what I have seen. I cannot walk those streets without feeling that some fatal flaw lies just below the surface; and the compassion which I feel for people who have suffered and lost a great deal turns easily to anger and irritation.

When I was introduced to the chairman of the Tribal Council, he asked me if I was disappointed to find that he was not a savage. I could have understood and felt for him if I had not found in him and in others an apologetic apathy which was only thinly disguised by this external cynicism. If he did indeed express the world's view, then the blame was not entirely with the outsiders. Dignity will not be achieved unless the world's view is shown to be false; it cannot be earned by conforming to the world's misconception. Yet I feel that this is the vicious circle to which these people have become accustomed. It will be broken only if they desire it and also find the necessary strength of spirit.

*K.E.Read*



## NOCTURNAL

*James McAuley*

I walked abroad at night  
Out of the world's heat where our hopes were dying.  
Low in the northern sky, full-spanning bright,  
    The Swan was flying  
Seaward, as if to quit the shore  
That heeded its design no more.

I cried: Do not depart,  
Bright image of desire: if you forsake us,  
Dishonour in our deeds, death in our art,  
    Will overtake us;  
Your wing-beats, O celestial Swan,  
Are all that makes the heart go on.

It seemed that it replied:  
Do not complain if absence rules the season;  
The works of men are freighted on a tide  
    Whose secret reason  
Moves also the bright signs above:  
Turn back and fight the wars of love.



## The Men Who Rescue Playgrounds

*"Hey, look, there's the footer we lost last week!" The man with the mower picked up the damp football and threw it to the excited group of youngsters. "Gee, it's good to have our playground back to play on," piped one happy five-year-old.*

AT many church homes, schools and hospitals, the lawns and playgrounds must be left to run wild because there is so much else to tend—and resources are so limited.

In Sydney, however, commercial enterprise has come to the rescue. As soon as the summer peak buying period eases, a group of employees of the Victa motor mower company are given special leave from the factory production line. These men go out with Victa machines to provide a free mowing service where the need is greatest.

Over 65 of these extensive mowing projects have been completed. The tasks range from mowing overgrown lawns to clearing acres of knee-high paspalum and light scrub. Fortunately, although the Victa motor mower is primarily designed for mowing fine grass, it can also make short work of the roughest growth.

The success of the Victa Community Service programme has brought a twofold reward to its sponsors. Firstly, they have had the pleasure of seeing the smiles of grateful children. Secondly, knowledge of the Victa's capabilities has become even more widespread.

In a highly competitive age, the men who rescue playgrounds prove that a progressive company can render practical service to the community, yet still promote its interests in the less altruistic realm of "big business."

## WALKING ZERO

THE YOGI *vs* THE COMMISSAR

Vinny D'Cruz

THE MOST specifically Indian political innovation since Mahatma Gandhi's *satyagraha* (peaceful resistance) was *bhoodan* (peaceful gift of land), now extended to *gramdan* (peaceful gift of villages). The founder of this unique movement is a wizened old man, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, a fervent disciple of Gandhi. Defining himself once, in the introduction to his Marathi rendering of Gandhi's booklet *Mangal Prabhat*, he wrote: 'Vinya is like the non-being zero of mathematics. The master or *guru* is one and unique whose fame grows by the addition of zeros'.

On 17 April, 1951, Bhave walked through the Telengana district after a Communist rebellion in which landlords were murdered and police repression was fierce. The air was sick with the despair of landless villagers. Amidst the debris of destitution and violence, unknown to the people or to himself, the Zero was walking to his destiny. At the village of Pochampalli, Nalgonda, Bhave asked the people what they wanted. 'Land,' they cried. He appeared lost in thought for the moment, then asked: 'If land is not provided by the government, cannot something be done by the village people themselves? There are a few landlords listening to me. Is none of them willing to donate some of his land?' At first a general silence, then one man got up and said: 'I will give you land, I will give you one hundred acres.' The people were taken aback. Bhave dismissed his audience, took the speaker aside and discovered that the offer was made in earnest. Bhave sensed that here was the solution he had been seeking.

To village after village that Bhave went his appeal was equally successful. As he went about collecting land, he developed his programme: new wells, new canals, cottage industries, basic education. Day after day his routine was—rise at four, morning prayer, study; then a walk after five, camp in a new village, bath, meal, rest; newspaper reading, correspondence for two hours, spinning for an hour; interviews after four, evening prayer at five, meeting, interviews; prayer and bed at nine. At this stage when someone spoke of his silent revolution that began with 'the miracle at Telengana', Bhave replied: 'No more talking please. The little work that has been done is the result

of the goodwill of each and all. One should always appeal to that goodwill. . . . Let us all think good, meditate good and do good.'

At the core of *bhoodan*, the motive is a moral one. Says Bhave: 'Like air, sun and water, land is a free gift of God and belongs to all. . . . If you have four sons and a fifth is born, you would certainly give him his share. Treat me as your fifth child and give me my rightful share. . . . The hungry masses are waiting. Share your land and wealth.' Finally: 'If you do not give to me, the Communists will take it from you.'

The movement captured the otherwise greedy landlord. Donations began to pour in. Bhave set his target at fifty million acres, that is one-sixth of India, so that everyone should have land. However, he got only four million acres, the size of Israel, which is more land than has ever been given away before. Problems were to arise, greatest of which were distribution and fragmentation. Both of these seemed to have been solved when in the district of Koraput, Orissa, the villagers gave him a whole village. This was the beginning of *gramdan*.

In a *gramdan* the villagers all get some land in trust. The size of holdings is determined by their needs. A small fraction of the land is set aside for common purposes, and the produce of it is earmarked for the school, the Co-operative store or the purchase of common bullocks. Ultimately decisions rest with the villagers, while the *bhoodan* voluntary workers are brought in only when their technical skill is required. Bhave's second in command, Annasaheb Sahasrabhude, Gandhi's best organizer and the father of the world's largest Co-operative, the All-India Spinners' Association, has meanwhile persuaded the Reserve Bank of India to extend credit automatically to the two thousand five hundred or more existing *gramdans*. This is very necessary, for when a village first becomes a *gramdan*, it faces grave financial difficulties because the villagers whose land can no longer be pledged cease to be credit-worthy. (And in India being credit-worthy comes second only to being alive!)

Says Bhave: 'The *bhoodan* programme is only the thin end of the wedge of all that we want to do. Our ultimate aim is to make land entirely free. There should be not only no individual ownership, but also no national ownership of land. We do not belong to this or that nation, but to the world. Air, water, light and land are direct gifts of God and must belong to the entire humanity.' In the political sphere: 'We want an order of society which will be not only free from exploitation, but also from governmental authority. The power of government will

be decentralized and distributed among the villages. Every village will be a state in itself; the centre will have only nominal authority over them. In this way, gradually, we will reach a state when authority in every form will have become unnecessary, and will therefore fade away, giving rise to a perfectly free society.' And: 'Every calling (from President to scavenger) is to be equally paid.'

Bhave's *sarvodaya* (ideal society) would be based on three postulates: efficiency of discipline by good thought without any dominant power in society; dedication of all resources of the citizen to society which must provide the individual with opportunity for growth and development; and equal moral, social and economic value of all callings honestly followed according to each one's strength.

Of interest are the different spiritual dispositions Bhave advocates to reach his *sarvodaya*. In each case he relies on 'heart conversation' to change individuals and groups. To Bhave, everybody is capable of improvement and even perfection. This is why everybody is called upon to make his five-fold gift so as to make a full contribution to social well-being: *prem-dan* (gift of love), *buddhi-dan* (gift of wisdom), *shram-dan* (gift of labour), *sampatti-dan* (gift of wealth) and *bhoomi-dan* or *bhoodan* (gift of land). All these must coalesce into a great *yagna* (sacrifice or offering).

Thus the claim arose that here at last, in *bhoodan*, was the antidote to the spirit of violence which the Communists had communicated to the landless peasants of Telengana. Here was the world's most dramatic refutation of the Marxian dialectic. Indeed many an ex-Communist, disillusioned by de-stalinization, by the massacres in Hungary, by the Soviet intimidation of Tito and by the fate of the flowers that would not bloom as Mao wanted, found an alternative.

At this juncture, however, a change in the Moscow Line brought the Communist talent for adaptation into play. At the moment when Bhave's conquest by peace was catching the imagination of the Indian people, Comrade Ghosh returned from the Communist Twentieth Congress in 1956 to report to the Communist Party of India that Moscow had given its benediction to the thesis of 'peaceful transition to socialism'; 'This thesis of peaceful transition to socialism is a big weapon in our hands.' Shortly after, the Communist Party of India delegated members to attend the Gramdan Conference held in Mysore. After the Conference, Comrade Namboodripad, now Chief of the Communist-ruled state of Kerala, who was



one of the delegates, told a meeting in Mysore: The Communist Party of India acknowledges in the *gramdan* movement 'an alternative to its own policy in regard to land problems and rural organization'.

Meanwhile, comparing himself with the Communists, Bhave was proclaiming that when 'minor differences' are neglected, 'there is no difference in our conception of the ideal society and its nature'. The only point of difficulty, as Bhave sees it, is the Communist belief that violence might be necessary on the road to progress. If only the Communists would renounce violent means, says Bhave, and adjust their progress to the cultural tradition of India, 'as the Ganges becomes wider and moves on, and finally merges into the ocean. . . Marxism will merge into *sarvodaya* one day. The future will prove the truth of this. The Communist friends welcome me. I love them.' The wooing is now mutual.

Some will probably hold out hope that Bhave will prevail over the Communists' determination and organized subversion of his movement. Those who are a little more acquainted with the capabilities of the Commissar, whether he is dressed in a loin cloth or in a suit, find it hard to indulge in the luxury of this hope. It is little wonder then that *The Times of India* reports a seminar of *bhoodan* workers at Sevagram who have now decided that their movement should be developed with 'the ultimate aim of achieving the abolition of private property'.

Running as a thread through his whole dedicated life, one recognizes Bhave's willingness to sacrifice himself entirely for what he believes in and holds dear to his heart. Martyrdom is something noble. And wooing a Commissar could be rather an interesting experience. Only, it would be a pity if Bhave's martyrdom were merely the result of a 'kiss of death'.

All this raises the question: Whither *bhoodan*?

Vinny D'Cruz

THE TOM COLLINS HOUSE TRUST FUND

The Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers is seeking donations for the preservation of the house which Tom Collins (Joseph Furphy) built at Swanbourne. Cheques should be made payable to the FAW (WA Section Inc.) and sent to the Secretary, 82 Lawson Flats, 6 Esplanade, Perth. The royalties on the anthology *West Coast Stories*, edited by H. Drake-Brockman and published by Angus & Robertson will be entirely devoted to this cause.



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## REVIEWS

### AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE:

#### *New Guinea and Australia*

Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 25s.

As its title suggests, this is not about New Guinea but about the problem New Guinea presented, or seemed to present, to Australians at the beginning of 1958. Though there are two useful descriptive chapters about New Guinea—'The Land' by Dr H.C. Brookfield and 'The People' by Dr J.T. Gunther, the informative as distinct from the argumentative side of the book is weakened by the absence of contributions from anthropologists, missionaries, or political scientists. Dr Gunther's chapter, admirable within its limits, concentrates mainly on health; the work done by Australian anthropologists in New Guinea ought to have brought from them some supplement to his description of the New Guinea people. It is also curious that, although Mr Hasluck lists Christianity as one of the main potential unifying forces, no account is given of the scope and nature of missionary activity. And it would have been helpful, particularly as background to Mr J.R. Kerr's paper on the political future, to have had some critical outline of administration.

But these weaknesses are not important because the book is really about Australia; it holds up New Guinea as a mirror in which Australians can see themselves—if they will look carefully enough. In the complex of issues arising from its nearness to New Guinea, the Australian political community is facing the first searching test of its capacity to think and act maturely—the first because, although eastern New Guinea has been formally an Australian responsibility for more than forty years, it is only since the Second World War that Australians

have fully perceived its significance for their own national future and seen it as a problem which they must work out according to their own insights, balancing trusteeship obligations against the interests of national security and calculating the consequences of policy in terms of the welfare of the people of New Guinea and also in terms of Australia's international relationships. All this is difficult enough, but behind it there is an issue both more profound and more elusive. What we face in New Guinea is not simply the problem of deciding what we *should* do; it is also the problem of deciding what we *can* do, of reaching an estimate of the possibilities of political action. Temperament, national and personal, counts for a good deal in a discussion of this issue. Partly because the State has had a major role in the development of the Australian society and economy, Australians commonly exaggerate the possibilities of political action. Most of the speakers in this debate showed this bias; they spoke easily of creating a new society in New Guinea; they wanted definite objectives and target dates; they saw danger only in hesitation and imprecision. It so happened that they met in Mr Hasluck, the Minister responsible for New Guinea, an articulate and at times brilliant exponent of the tradition of prudential wisdom. There are passages in his paper which measure to the standard of the 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs'. The brisk social engineers are dismissed as at best naive. 'People are apt to talk of a "policy" in the same way as one might think of selling a patent medicine.' If one has a policy, it can only be a matter of wide generalities. 'There are so many unpredictable forces at work both in the Territory and outside the Territory that only those who either know they

are omnipotent or do not know that they are foolish would declare emphatically what they will do.' The best course, therefore, is to try to understand the situation we are dealing with and 'to seek constantly for what we believe to be good and true'. To ask for definitions of goodness and truth is to move in the wrong direction; the civilized man will by virtue of being civilized recognize the good and the true in any given context; he will, moreover, have 'enough faith in the power of the good and the true to be convinced that the intellectual and the ethical path will eventually lead to a better result than will the crude intentions and harsh imperatives of the greedy and ignorant'. But Mr Hasluck does not think of social engineers simply as foolish and muddled people; at heart he is a little afraid of them because they may take their follies seriously, in which case they become gauleiters or commissars. 'It is part of the world's dilemma today that ignorance, barbarism and stupidity are dictating bold and firm statements and laying down clearly-defined courses of action while the pronouncements of civilized, thoughtful and knowledgeable men carry qualifications and hesitations . . .'.

When an Australian Cabinet Minister speaks so maturely and perceptively, it is hard to be other than admiring. One is nevertheless left with an uneasy feeling that Mr Hasluck won this debate too easily and that he lent unintentional support to the fallacy that prudential wisdom and rational planning are opposed modes of political action, the first applicable in a free society and the second doomed to frustration unless it is backed by the ruthlessness of a dictatorship. Oakeshott notwithstanding, what is distinctive in political action is precisely the element of rational calculation. Prudential wisdom is not an alternative to rationalism; it is the virtue of

being able to see that objectives change in the process of realizing them, that means and ends are not separable, and that the more remote and complex the objective the more frequently will the unpredictable intervene. Rational planning is not impossible under the conventions of the free society; it is only more difficult. Granted that most of the rational planning enthusiasts in this debate were unimpressive, it still has to be asked whether rational calculation and planning has been carried to its practicable limits. It is not naive to talk of creating a new society in New Guinea, because for better or worse that is what Australia cannot avoid doing. The question is whether it is within our capacity to bring into being the sort of society we hope for. The records of colonial administration do not justify exaggerated hopes, but they certainly do not justify despair.

Moreover, it is well to remember that prudential wisdom is a safer virtue in individuals than in institutions, in a Minister than in a department. A Minister can perhaps afford to reject as a fallacy 'the notion that politics is an activity governed by ends'; for the public servant the notion is not a fallacy but the rationale of his existence. The spurious but necessary science of O and M assumes that a public servant will work well if he knows or thinks he knows the ends of his activity and the means to their realization. As a Minister, Sir Winston Churchill was indefatigable in producing and demanding plans not because he was temperamentally a rationalist but because he knew their value as a stimulus to the resourcefulness and enthusiasm of a public service. Probably the public service machine which administers New Guinea could do with rather more of this sort of stimulus.

It may be, too, that in the case of New Guinea it is prudentially wise to take account of the prevailing



liberal-rationalist bias of political thought inside and outside Australia. We may be convinced that ten-point programmes and target dates are pretentious folly, but there is a case for making concessions to the climate of thought by spoofing a little. In Marshall Plan days the Americans were fanatical enthusiasts for plans and target dates. The outcome was a spate of estimates and predictions by European governments which their authors cynically designated crystal-gazing and which now make fantastic reading. But they served the useful purpose of pleasing the Americans and compelling hundreds of bureaucrats to work harder and think more clearly.

*Leicester Webb*

ERIC VOEGELIN:  
ORDER AND HISTORY

Vol. I : *Israel and Revelation*  
Vol. II : *The World of the Polis*  
Vol. III : *Plato and Aristotle*

*Louisiana State University Press.*

Eric Voegelin's *Order and History* is a theory of history as the continuing and recurring struggle of men to realize their free being under God. But it is more than a theory of history; it is projected 'not as an attempt to explore curiosities of a dead past, but as an inquiry into the structure of the order in which we live presently', as 'one of the means of establishing islands of order in the disorder of the age'.

Professor Voegelin has no less a goal than to controvert the two related theories of history which have created the world view that dominated our age: Marxism and the Liberal theory of progress. Both of them he sees arising from a rejection of the finite conditions of human life—ideologies which would substitute for the truly human end of 'the love of being through love of divine Being as the source of . . . order', a Utopian drive to redesign the world in the image of a pattern

of 'perfection', distorted in its shape and hideous in its consequences because of the finite limitations of the human designer.

The history of man, Professor Voegelin is saying, is the history of his understanding of his being and of the 'symbolizations' in which that understanding has been expressed—on the one hand, in myth and poetry, philosophy and sacred writings, and on the other hand, in the structure of political and social institutions.

1. In the immemorial millennia of the great early civilizations in which conscious order was first born—Egypt, Mesopotamia, China (before Lao Tze and Confucius), India (before Gautama Buddha and Jainism)—the ultimate truth of man's being was felt and understood in such identity with the factual presence of civil rule and social existence that the soul of the individual person remained undifferentiated from the society around him. By consequence, the transcendent, the Eternal Ground of being and of truth, was inconceivable. God and King, Heaven and Earth, Truth and Representation, were grasped in a unity that left no possibility for the emergence of the soul of the individual person or for recognition of the transcendent.

2. Almost simultaneously in Israel and in Greece, although in different ways, there burst through this undifferentiated primitive consciousness a new form of consciousness, a new 'symbolization'. This 'leap in being', as Voegelin calls it, broke through the unity in which the social order below and the cosmic order above were conceived, so that both Greek and Jew were suddenly able to perceive an immense chasm. In Israel it was by the direct grace of Revelation; in Greece (with grace no less the effective cause, I think Professor Voegelin would say), by the effort of philosophy. In their different ways each civilization be-

came aware of the tension between what is and what ought to be, between the immanent play of events in the world of actuality and the transcendent source of reality and ultimate value.

But deep as this revolution in ways of thought was, it stopped short of the confrontation of the individual person with the final Source of his being. The chasm that had appeared between God and man was too great, and the individual soul took refuge in collective unity with the *polis* (the city state) or 'the Chosen People', which became, instead of the person, the moral link between immanent existence and transcendent value.

The temptation was to return to the unity of the cosmological empires by forcing upon society a pattern derived from the finite human understanding of the transcendent. But the consciousness of Hebrew prophet and Greek philosopher at their highest—but only at the end, when the civilizational order around them was in decay—caught a glimpse of the ultimate reality. Deutero-Isaiah and Jeremiah, Plato and Aristotle, broke beyond the containment of consciousness in a collective, however hallowed, and saw that 'God is the measure' by which, without benefit of civil institution, the individual person is to be judged and must judge himself.

3. But this sublime insight remained the possession of philosopher and prophet. It could not become common to men and thereby mediate an outlook on existence and a set of institutions without a more concrete and at once more profound solution of the contradiction between the transcendent and the immanent. Only with the ultimate act of grace, the Incarnation, 'the flash of eternity into time', was it possible for the individual soul truly to recognize itself and its simultaneous existence in two worlds, the world of eternity and the world of time.

And thereby it became possible for human persons, drinking deep of the source of their being, to create an historical order inspired by understanding of the transcendent but aware that earth is not heaven and that human life, though inspired by transcendent understanding, 'must remain adjusted to the order of mundane existence'. This understanding created our great tradition, which recognizes and is based upon 'the tensions, frictions, and balances between the two levels of attunement, a dualistic structure of existence which expresses itself in pairs of symbols, of *theologia civilis* and *theologia supranaturalis*, of temporal and spiritual powers, of secular state and church'.

4. In challenge to this balanced tension which is the high world view of the West, there has arisen in recent centuries a new outlook, at first obscure and clothed in religious terms, then more and more open and radically man-worshipping in philosophical content. This outlook Voegelin calls 'gnosticism'. Now dominating our world in its two forms of Communism and Liberalism, it threatens to destroy the wonder of man's discovery of his being under God in the conditions of a finite existence and the balanced institutions that reflect that understanding. This world view of 'gnosticism' begins with a refusal to accept the conditions of mundane existence, with an overweening pride in the glimpsed image of perfection distorted by the limits of man's understanding, and with a determination to enforce it upon the world, come what may. It ends in the bloody terror of the Lubianka cellars or the dry terror of social-engineered conformity.

Until *Order and History* is finished, one cannot speak with assurance of Professor Voegelin's counsel to the West at this moment when our ancient and integral heritage is so mightily assaulted from without and

from within. But judging both from his work as a whole, so far as we now have it, and from these latest volumes where the Greek experience of civilizational decay and spiritual rebirth is so vividly presented, it is possible to be reasonably certain. What he would seem to be saying is that our fate hangs in the balance and will depend upon the degree to which we are able not simply to recover the understanding of our ancestors, but to enrich it and deepen it so that it may live triumphant in an idiom that speaks to contemporary man.

It may be objected that this is the enterprise not of men of action, but of philosophers. Perhaps it is, and perhaps only that enterprise can save us. If so, Eric Voegelin will be long remembered as one of the foremost of those who defeated the forces of infamy.

*Frank S. Meyer*

J. M. D. PRINGLE:

*The Australian Accent*

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As we were standing around with glasses in our hands listening to Mr Kingsley Martin tell us how we should give away New Guinea, one of the group interrupted. After warning Martin that the pulse of Australian nationalism was thumping he said: 'The trouble with you, Mr Martin, is that you still have the British colonial complex. You are still trying to tell us what to do.' The delicious comedy of this situation almost excused the ineptitude of the remark: but not quite. We really must get out of this habit of being so exclusively Australian that no one else is allowed to talk about Australia, with the exception, perhaps, of those well known honorary Australian writers, William Dampier, James Cook and D.H. Lawrence.

This lower middle class passion for stopping the neighbours talking about us has been inflamed by the

reviews of John Pringle's observations on some features of Australian life. The snarls that have greeted his book have sounded uncomfortably like symptoms of outrageous, even frightened, colonialism. The main weapon that has been used against him has been pernickety criticism, criticism that assumes standards that are so narrow that if they were applied to books generally they would result in reviewers slamming everything except the most cautiously written books. To pick up a few lapses in grammar, some errors in fact, and some risky generalizations, to point to scrappiness and faults in development, are all possible with Mr Pringle's book but—for Heaven's sake!—is it not possible to do this with most writing? Those who do not know that to write almost any book involves a few lapses in grammar and errors in fact either do not read books, or must usually read them carelessly, reserving their more careful reading, apparently, for the time when they need evidence for an unfavourable review. It is worth observing that these scholarly standards are not usually applied to books written by Australians about Australia; here any kind of drivel is likely to be praised so long as it is written by the right person and expresses the correct sentiments.

What I like about Mr Pringle's book—and this is exactly what many Australians have not liked about it—is that it generalizes about Australia in the kind of way and about the kind of things that books about countries usually do. (The grammar of that last sentence is worth looking into.) It makes Australia sound as if it were just another country; you live in it for five years and then write a book about it giving your impressions of its social structure, some of its political problems, some aspects of its cultural life. You do to Australia the kind of things you do if you happen to have spent five years living in some quite

ordinary country such as Iceland, or Russia, or Brazil, or the United States, or India. You are not particularly pretentious about it; you know you are not de Tocqueville; but you describe, from the viewpoint of an educated and travelled person, what you have seen.

I hope that educated Englishmen who come here for a while go on doing this, although the reactions to Mr Pringle's book may discourage them. I am looking forward to a Malcolm Muggeridge book, an Angus Maude book, a Kingsley Martin book (even if they are all riddled with bad grammar, inaccuracies and over-generalizations) because these men can write clearly and entertainingly (even if wrongly) about changing societies, developing political situations and intellectual and cultural struggles for power. The field of writing about Australia has been held far too long by the kind of person who sorts out information about old or comparatively static issues and writes out his reports with crudity. It has been concerned too much with the kind of subjects that are easy to handle at Universities. Who really gives a damn about the Federal Constitution or Henry Lawson? To relieve the boredom of talking about Australia we need books that give the lowdown on Santamaria, or explain the effects of society hostesses on Australian painting, or examine why cab drivers want their passengers to sit in the front seat. This kind of thing brings Australia to life by cutting it down to size, by universalizing it, by revealing in it the familiar patterns of human activity. Even if his achievement falls short of his ambitions, by adopting this approach Mr Pringle makes his book refreshing and makes one hope there will be more of it. It is one of the few books on Australia I have ever enjoyed reading. But then I have not made a heavy intellectual

investment in Joseph Furphy or Section 92.

A reasoned and mature discussion of Australian cultural and social life might at least drag Australian novel and play writing out of its boring preoccupation with the primitive. For instance, in a society in which people 'get on' with the impetus of a hero in a picaresque novel it is interesting that nobody has been concerned with the opportunities for social adventure, for movement between the classes, in this country; the conflicts of social difference are exploited only at the crudest level. And, although as Mr Pringle points out, in any real sense there is no educated class in Australia, there are a considerable number of educated persons; generally speaking, people of this kind make more effective subject matter for plays and novels than anybody else; yet nobody here writes about them. All is silence. When Ray Mathew writes a play that treats an Australian society in European terms nobody puts it on; when John Pringle writes a book that talks about Australia as if it were any other country people correct his grammar. I do not know what monstrosities lurk behind this blank wall, this refusal to engage in interesting conversation; but it may take genius of an unusually wily and adventurous kind to break it down. Perhaps we shall then discover what is behind it. And it may be—nothing. D.R.Horne

LEICESTER WEBB:  
*Church and State in Italy*  
Melbourne University Press. 8s. 6d.

This book has been highly and deservedly praised by reviewers in several Australian and overseas publications. The author knows his subject and has given the best summary of it that exists in English. This review aims at showing Australian liberals and democrats why the book should be of special interest to them.



In all democracies, except India, the Catholic Church is the Church of a majority or of a substantial minority. In all democracies the Catholic Church teaches its adherents to be good citizens and to take an active part in the government of their country. Often it trains them in the required skills and techniques. Frequently the men it has trained form political organizations, and with these the Hierarchy of the Church has close links. So it is natural for people to ask, as they do in Australia: 'If Catholics become influential in political life, and especially if they become dominant, will they use State power to further the interests of their own Church more than the interests of other Churches and will they respect those civil liberties which liberals rightly regard as the defences of democracy—e.g., freedom of worship, of speech, and of propaganda?'

Very few questions about how men will behave in the future can be answered with absolute certainty. This question cannot, either: but we can answer it with a great probability of being right by looking at the record of those countries of Western Europe in which, since the Second World War, Christian Democratic Parties have exercised political power. In West Germany, Ireland, Holland and Belgium the State has remained or become non-confessional and has given equal liberties to all Churches. In only one of these countries, Ireland, is press censorship noticeably more rigid than it is in England or Australia, and even there cases of censorship concern sexual morality, in which it is notoriously hard to draw the line between pornography and 'writing fit for adults only'. In all of these countries in the nineteenth century the main political division was that between Catholics and non-Catholics. In all of them in the post-war period it is between democrats and totalitarians, and the Christian Democrats

have lined up with the 'humanist' liberals and the Social Democrats against totalitarians of the left or of the right. It is continually amusing to see the regularity with which de Gaulle acts democratically as soon as Anglo-Saxon political writers have predicted that he will act the totalitarian or the bigot. Democracy has won even in France.

But what about Italy? There the Catholic Church is most powerful, and, one would expect, most characteristic. Does it there act within democratic norms or does it use political power to achieve its own religious ends? In this book the author shows that there is a struggle within Italian Christian Democracy between these two uses of power; but the general trend of the new Italian State is towards the political pattern of Holland and of West Germany. The Constitution of 1948 decrees in Article 8 that 'all religious creeds shall be equally free before the law', and Articles 19 and 20 safeguard the right of religious association and prevent the State from discriminating against associations on religious grounds. These constitutional liberties are contradicted by certain Fascist laws which are still enforced and by some provisions of the Concordat between Pope Pius XI and Mussolini, which has been renewed by the post-war Italian Government but with provision for alteration by mutual consent. However, there has been a gradual elimination of contradictions between the Constitution and these Fascist laws and the Concordat, and in every case the choice as to which law should prevail was made in favour of democratic liberty and the separation of Church and State.

The Vatican has resisted most of the changes which involved a loss of privilege for the Catholic Church but by means which were mild compared with those of medieval times and which seem designed to



slow down a process of change rather than to arrest or reverse it. It would, we think, resist much more forcibly attempts to change education or divorce laws. On these two questions Christian Democrats on the one hand and Social Democrats and liberals on the other have never succeeded in reaching agreement. They can reach a compromise on them after an expression of conflict more or less normal in Continental democratic regimes.

There is one criticism which may justly be made of this book. At one stage the author deals with the degree to which the Catholic Church may or ought to organize its members to attain political power and then to use it to protect or to advance specifically Catholic interests. He states correctly what was done in Italy and then judges it by a principle which he seems to think is a principle of liberalism or of democracy, but which in fact is not. It may be against the principles of certain Protestant Churches for a Church to create and to control an organized political machine. It is against the principles of the Catholic Church to do so—except in two cases which will be explained later. But the principles of liberal democracy permit any group of citizens to organize a political party to advance by democratic means its own interests, as long as these are not incompatible with the public good. Unions do it, employers do it, many others try to do it, e.g. the Temperance League, the Freemasons, many Protestant Churches. One cannot object to this on democratic principles. All of these groups are exercising their democratic rights. One can on the same principle create a counter-organization.

However, the Catholic Church, because of its own principles rarely chooses to exercise this democratic right. It believes that it is not a mere association within the State. It is a society in its own right having

functions and powers separate from those of the State. It considers that its mission of saving souls is always hindered, and only sometimes helped, by any involvement of the Church in political matters—I mean involvement as a participant, not as teacher or guide on moral principles. There are, however, at least two conditions of temporal society under which the Church may, or should, temporarily organize as a political force and accept as regrettable but necessary any connected disadvantages. One case is when justice in some serious matter, e.g., education, is denied to Catholics and cannot be obtained except through power politics. The other case is when some anti-Catholic force, e.g., Communism, seriously threatens the existence of the Church and cannot be successfully opposed except by uniting into a political force motivated by the strongest of motives (for noble minds), the defence of the Faith. Many Catholics believe that, even in these cases, political organization is likely to be beyond the capacity of the average ecclesiastic and should be left to laymen. Once justice is obtained or the danger is diminished the political organization should cease to be controlled by ecclesiastics and should be disbanded or become a civic organization of Catholic inspiration.

In Italy it was a well-justified fear of a Communist government which caused Italian Catholic Action (which is controlled by Bishops) to form Civic Committees (which are controlled by Catholic Action) to win electoral support for the Christian Democrats. These Civic Committees numbered in 1947, twenty-four thousand, and were the real electoral machine of the Italian Democratic Party. Yet, as the author shows, this Party, when in power has resisted attempts at ecclesiastical control and exercised due autonomy.

This political action of the Church achieved its object. It saved Italy

from Communism. It had also some undesirable results. Other political parties could not construct a political machine as large or as dynamic, and they, naturally, raised the cry: 'The Church should not interfere in politics.' There was a danger that some of the Hierarchy would try to manipulate the Party they had created to procure other ends besides justice and the defence of the Church from Communism. This would be to try to achieve purely spiritual ends by political means. One cannot say that this is opposed to Catholic principles. History would seem to say the opposite. But modern experience of the growth and vigour of the Catholic Church in such non-confessional States as the United States of America has made many Catholics think that the Church's own means are more efficient for her ends than any use of State power. She does not need to link herself with political regimes to fulfil her mission to mankind. If she does so link herself she will suffer when these regimes grow ossified, unpopular and are replaced by others. This belief has found much acceptance in Italy, and even in the Vatican. In the English-speaking countries any other opinion is strange, almost fabulous, to the ordinary Catholic.

*John M. Fahey*

MAX FRISCH:

*I'm Not Stiller*

*Abelard-Schuman. London & New York. 22s. 6d.*

At the first interval of *Fidelio*, after the great chorus of prisoners, there was a ring of pride in my host's voice, as he said: 'That is the great European tradition. After the defeat of Hitler, before there was any electric light or gas, in Vienna there was a performance of *Fidelio*. It is all there, you see, the release of the prisoners, the creeping out from despair into light. For hundreds of years, every European artist and writer knew that he spoke for a

positive thing—for freedom, for the rights of human beings. It is the liberal tradition.'

And now, in Switzerland, always supposed to be one of the most liberal, cultured, and freedom-loving countries, an inheritor of the European tradition writes the story of the artist who denies his genius and refuses his mission.

Part One of the book is Stiller's diary in prison. Why, he asks, does everyone from the warder to the prosecutor insist that he is a local sculptor who has vanished from the country? Why do they insist on recognizing him, confronting him with his supposed wife, whom Stiller had left to die, his old statues?

He has an American passport, but he has been arrested and is kept in a cell. They are all begging him to admit he is Stiller. He is convicted of being Stiller. In America he had looked for an inner liberation. Why did he come back?

This enigmatic, psychological novel derives its greatest interest from its summing-up of the position of the European artist today. Stiller is an artist looking for freedom, but his predicament is that freedom has ceased to be positive. It lies only in denial; denial of responsibilities, of compulsory military service, of family obligations, of affection for mistress and wife, denial of the whole social structure.

This denial is what the man-who-refuses-to-be-Stiller undertakes. The prosecutor hints that he will be charged with some link with Communism, and this Stiller rejects contemptuously. Communists are only another tyranny. Where once was the hope of freedom in Europe, there is only a blank wall along which he gropes. He can only turn in on himself to the miserable tangle of his feeling for his sick and frigid wife, his inability to adjust himself, to make compromises and produce the kind of art which his fellow citizens demand of him.

Stiller, set free, turns with an ironic complacency to selling ornamented pots for a living. He also completes the destruction of his wife. This, after all, was the hidden purpose of his return. Frau Julika Stiller is a ballerina with TB who does not understand her husband and rejects him. She runs a dancing school. She is the personification of European culture. For a time she is in love with a publicity expert but that does not last. In the sanatorium she is attracted to a priest, but he dies. Stiller, with his pre-occupations, his intensity, drives her to despair, and she lavishes her affection on a pet dog. When she seems dying, Stiller deserts her.

If the symbolism is heavy, the author skilfully manages to preserve Stiller and his wife as individuals. The Public Prosecutor epitomizes the worthwhile intelligent and ambitious citizen. He is emotionally involved in that his wife has been Stiller's mistress, but he would stand Stiller's friend at his trial, if Stiller would allow it. When Stiller is taken to his old studio, the Public Prosecutor studies the books on his shelves. There is a long list of these books. 'Anyhow,' the-man-who-was-Stiller comments cynically, 'it would be a difficult job to make a spiritual warrant of arrest out of this lot.' He ends the confrontation in the studio by throwing the busts—the company director's head in plaster—out the window.

What irritates Stiller most is his counsel, his defender. 'My counsel was still speaking: "So chin up, there's no place like home, man needs roots, millions homeless so I should be thankful, mustn't look on the black side, a little love for mankind, the Swiss are only human too, a more positive attitude called for on my part, more composure, no smashing things up like just now, enough nihilism in the world today, every individual must do his bit to improve the world, if everyone

wholeheartedly desired the good things, would be all right. . . ."

But Stiller refuses to be Stiller. He refuses to be a successful sculptor. He will settle down to a fusty usefulness making pots and breaking his wife's heart, but he can come to no terms with the tight, smug society which accuses him of not being what it wants.

There have been many statements of the protest of the artist against society but very few as well written as *I'm Not Stiller* or with such intensity and dramatic force. It is a novel in the great tradition, its style echoing the epoch when, for the artist, freedom was positive as sunlight and he led out the prisoners. But Stiller today prefers his cell to the society which begs him to accept a place in it.

Kylie Tennant

TIBOR MERAY:

*The Enemy*

Secker & Warburg. London. 19s. 3d.

Accepting as a fact that none of us can be quite certain whether the balance of our actions tilts towards good or bad, we can still recognize malevolence in its larger forms. The Hungarian Communist narrator of Meray's novel is clearly on his way to becoming a leading bureaucratic terror-monger. But we cannot mark him down as naturally evil, and leave it at that. It is too easy to imagine that the monsters of totalitarian regimes are created in some swamp land of the emotions. Meray's book, a satire as concise as it is perfectly controlled, is effective as an indictment of the Russian Communist system precisely because it shows how an unremarkable man becomes a vital part of his country's fabric of suspicion, and because his transformation appears an inevitable product of the regime.

It is true that bullies and backstabbers can and do emerge in any organization under any form of government; but Meray, a former

Communist himself, seems to indicate that the structure of Communist bureaucracy provides exceptional opportunities for this. Fear and a sense of guilt in such a society become more than ordinarily potent catalysts for fanaticism.

The narrator of this book has a sense of guilt because his father was formerly a shopkeeper, and therefore a small capitalist. This is equivalent to having been born on the wrong side of the railway tracks in the old sense. However hard Comrade Nemeth tries to be an ideal Communist man, there must always be an element of striving and uneasiness in his conformity. It was this sort of striving that once produced self-made millionaires, and probably still does. Among the Communists it seems to result in an abnormal passion for ideological correctness. For who can be sure that the remnants of a shameful petit-bourgeois past may not one day sabotage the theoretical super-highways of Marxist thinking?

Nemeth's chief, a very parfait, ungentil comrade, goes to a higher post abroad and overwhelms his subordinate by offering him the direction of a small office. But, he warns, Nemeth is to beware: Someone in the office is an Enemy. Nemeth's ability to identify and denounce that Enemy will be the best possible test of his fitness for his new task.

At first, Nemeth finds it incredible that any of the four people under him could be an enemy. One is a middle-aged woman, quiet and efficient in her work; one a boyhood friend who has proved his friendship in practical ways; one an old Communist, who once suffered imprisonment for his loyalty to the Party; and one the girl he loves. Later, of course, as his fear of failure increases, he finds cause for alarm in each of them. The elderly woman appears to be nothing less than an active clerical reactionary; the friend a pro-Western playboy of no moral worth; the old

militant a free-wheeling scoffer who once objected to the Hitler-Stalin pact; his girl the offspring of contemptible White Russian parents.

Narrow in thought, entirely lacking in humour, Nemeth hurries through his tragi-comedy of errors, finding no one matching his paper prescription of a Communist, until, in a state of ideological hypochondria, he is forced to the conclusion that he himself is the Enemy.

At this point, Nemeth knows he ought to resign, admit defeat, even commit suicide (although that is an un-Communist sort of death). In the end, however, by a process of reasoning which shows Meray's powers of impersonation at their best, he makes the subtle but epochal change from earnest if misguided zealot to self-justifying career man.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about this book is the way Meray has been able to keep his literary head after experiencing the national tragedy of the 1956 October Rising. His bitterness has been purged of vehemence. His indignation has become a sharp weapon.

Roger Covell

DOUGLAS STEWART:

*Four Plays*

*Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 30s. od.*

Douglas Stewart's chief asset as a dramatist is his ability with the language, and the main interest in these plays is his attempt to create a medium which is both convincing and poetic. In *The Fire on the Snow*, which has moments of grandeur, he achieves an economy of statement which is evocative and moving, especially in the interpolated chorus-like comments of the announcer. The legend of Scott of the Antarctic provides the dramatist with a theme of nobility and courage, which he develops into a skilfully handled meditation on motive.

The other plays are about legends too—*The Golden Lover* is drawn from



Maori folk-lore, *Shipwreck* from accounts of an incident off the western coast of Australia in the seventeenth century, and Ned Kelly is, of course, about the criminal 'hero'—but these do not capture our imagination as *The Fire on the Snow* does, partly because the author's response seems to have been less intense and convinced. These three plays are too long, and rather slackly written: Mr Stewart seems to be trying, as F.W.W.Rhodes put it many years ago, to manufacture poetry out of cliché. The style may be realistic but it lacks dignity and point.

Mr Stewart seems then to have scored one hit and three misses. But the hit is a bull's-eye; and it will be a pity if the current enthusiasm for *The Shifting Heart* and *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* obscures the fact that *The Fire on the Snow* is a remarkable achievement, probably Australia's best contribution to dramatic literature.

Grahame Johnston

JOHN JEWKES, DAVID SAWERS  
and RICHARD STILLERMAN:

*The Sources of Invention*  
Macmillan. London. 51s. 6d.

This book is fascinating in detail and the conclusions reached by the authors are important. Chance and individual intuition and initiative continue to play a significant important part in invention. There is no sign that inventions can be reliably predicted, and the catalogue of predictive errors is huge. The errors have been twofold: the foretelling of things which have not come to pass, such as the replacement of other sources of power by the gas turbine commonly expected after the Second World War; and the denial that things were possible which have been brought to pass, such as the assertion in 1906 by the Engineering Editor of *The Times* that 'artificial aviation' was an engineering impossibility.

The main question examined is whether the day of the individual inventor is now to be regarded as over. How far is invention a matter of large teams and institutions, and does monopoly in industry favour progress in invention? There is no doubt that a trend towards corporate research has been established, and in some fields the advantages of 'institutionalization' are clear. Does this prove the assumption so widely accepted that independent individual effort is entirely outmoded?

The evidence presented in this volume does not purport to be conclusive, but strongly favours the conclusion that individual effort is still efficacious and that the stifling of it by complete institutionalization may endanger the progress of invention. Individuals and small groups working freely, not under rigidly planned direction, are still responsible for a large part of the important innovations. For example most of the important inventions in the textile industry were made without much equipment and by individuals. Whittle pioneered the jet engine with small resources. Farnsworth's primary work on TV was improvised with inexpensive devices. The individual brings an uncommitted mind, unorthodoxy and adventurousness, exploring avenues which institutional opinion ignores or considers closed: for instance, 'Earl Thompson invented synchromesh when the gear companies were all searching for easy change devices but trying free wheels, constant mesh gears, etc., all of which were far less effective'.

Those who have read the somewhat horrifying picture in Whyte's *The Organization Man* of the mediocrity that can develop in over-planned and over-organized research will find support for his views in this book. One can only hope that it will be widely read and thought about in its remoter social and political consequences. *Harold Standish*



REBECCA WEST:  
*The Court and the Castle*  
 Macmillan. London. 29s. 6d.

Rebecca West has brought many of her diverse interests as a writer and observer into focus in this meditation on literature, the theme of which she states in its most general terms thus: 'it is a tendency of creative literature, when it rises above a certain level, to involve itself with statecraft and with religion'. She picks up the clue to her labyrinth in *Hamlet* and other plays in which the nature of power is deeply examined. For Shakespeare, the dilemma of power is that it is necessary but turns to evil because of the metaphysical corruption of human nature. She then examines the varying views exemplified by Fielding and later novelists, ending with Proust and Kafka.

Sometimes her interpretations become perverse and one-sided because she rides her thesis contrarily. She does this with Shakespeare himself, forcing him into a Calvinist position of maintaining the total depravity of the human will—and even going further in *Hamlet* to an exclusion of grace: he 'leaves his damned world damned for ever on his page'. This leads her to blackening Hamlet's character till he becomes a complete egotist incapable of any natural ties. She claims, for instance, that Hamlet 'treats Horatio as a listening ear rather than as a friend'. That is an unfair and tendentious forcing of the text out of its natural shape.

But for every point at which one must dissent from the interpretation one must concede another where her observation is brilliantly illuminating, for instance in her measured analysis both of the power of the prose novel and of its essential limitations and inferiority to great poetry.

Above all her discussion recalls us to a level of consideration which rescues literature from the limp decadence of current ideas about its proper character and role. J.McA.

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JUNICHIRO TANIZAKI:

*The Makioka Sisters*

Secker &amp; Warburg, 26s. od.

Junichiro Tanizaki's story of the four sisters of a well-to-do old Osaka family is typically Japanese in style and treatment, yet fascinating material for thoughtful Western readers. It moves slowly, and the reactions of the main characters are described in detail. But Tanizaki is such a good novelist that there is also excitement, tension, and at times a sense of mystery, as his saga of the sisters moves to its leisurely conclusion. One is left with the impression that this tale of the hearts and minds of Japanese women might be followed by a sequel, and perhaps the author intended this.

Though there are four sisters in the Makioka family, the story is told through the experiences and mental struggles of the second sister, Sachiko, married to a kindly intelligent Osaka accountant. She has one daughter, Etsuko, a precocious child, just at school as the tale opens. The main area of this novel depicts the problem of the arranged marriage. We are shown three *imai*, or first meetings of the prospective bride and bridegroom. For Yukiko, the third daughter, now thirty, has attained a dangerous age where the marriage market is concerned, having thwarted previous attempts to get her married. It is necessary for her to wed before the modern fourth daughter, the impetuous Taeko, already branded by a runaway attempt to wed 'Kei-boy' Okubata, can do so. He is still waiting to marry her as soon as Yukiko's alliance is complete. He 'sows his wild oats' at local tea houses while he waits.

While the marriage market for Yukiko, never a living figure in this tale, is the background of the book, ancient customs and pleasures of the people are so cleverly insinuated into the story that the readers are not bored by elaborate explanations of cherry blossom viewing at Kyoto, firefly hunting at a country spot near Nagoya, and a typhoon releasing terror in Tokyo. The maid, O Haru, goes maple-viewing at Nikko, and I was sorry her excursion there was not described in detail too. The flooding of the Kobe area is a gripping section of the story, when the photographer, son of a retainer of 'Kei-boy', rescues Taeko, and later enters into an intrigue with her.

Sachiko's reactions are the main movement of this novel. But the Japanese method of giving a flashback of events in the form of letters to the elder sister at the 'main house' is rather tedious. The 'main house' is Tsukuko's, eldest of the four, married to a less kindly man than Sachiko's husband, at whose home the younger sisters prefer to stay. A well-reared, middle-class woman of Japan is revealed in the character of Sachiko, and the effect of modern-day freedom on the selfish, wayward Taeko. The third and successful *imai* for Yukiko brings the tale to a close, this alliance having been arranged by Mrs Itani, beauty specialist, who had previously failed in a similar attempt.

Beneath surface events, we see materialism and fear of the herd dominates match-making. Not all arranged marriages, though carefully planned, are successful. I recall one Japanese friend who wrecked her alliance by developing tuberculosis on her honeymoon. *Rae Campbell*

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